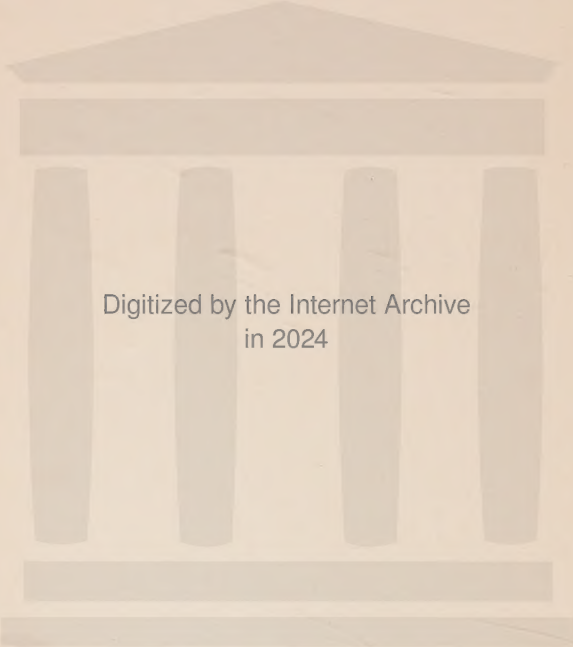


# Revival Sermons

J. Wilbur Chapman







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024



# REVIVAL SERMONS



# REVIVAL SERMONS

BY

J. WILBUR CHAPMAN, D.D.

*Author of "Another Mile," "S. H. Hadley of Water Street," "And Peter," "The Ivory Palace of the King," etc., etc.*



NEW YORK

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1911, by  
**FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY**

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue  
London: 99 Anerley Road



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN? . . . .	7
II. HOW MAY I KNOW I AM A CHRISTIAN? . . . .	26
III. HOW MAY OTHER PEOPLE KNOW THAT I AM A CHRISTIAN? . . . .	46
IV. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? . . . .	64
V. THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM . . . .	72
VI. THE LOST AXE-HEAD . . . .	83
VII. IS IT WELL WITH THEE? . . . .	97
VIII. REGENERATION . . . .	110
IX. REPENTANCE . . . .	121
X. NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM . . . .	132
XI. HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE? . . . .	143
XII. SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT . . . .	156
XIII. CAST OFF BECAUSE—— . . . .	169
XIV. ACCEPT HIM NOW . . . .	183
XV. GOD'S EX-RAYS . . . .	195
XVI. THE LAST CHANCE . . . .	206
XVII. THE ANXIOUS SOUL'S QUESTION . . . .	217
XVIII. A LIFE MADE OVER . . . .	229



# I

## WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

**T**HE disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." But what is a Christian? If you should be asked to give a definition of a Christian, what would your answer be? It is not enough to say that a Christian is one who is a member of the Church, because many Church members are not Christians. Nor is it sufficient for you to reply that a Christian is one who is an officer of the Church, for I doubt not that some Church officers will hear Him say at the great day, "I never knew you." It certainly is not a satisfactory answer that one is a Christian because he is a minister in the Church, because we are very sure that when we come to the judgment seat of Christ, and possibly at the judgment of the Great White Throne, some who have stood in the pulpit will find that their works have all been burned, and they themselves saved "as by fire," or they, too, may hear Him say, "I never knew you, depart from me."

What is a Christian? I was standing one morning in a hotel in Seoul, the capital of Korea, in conversation with a young Korean who told me that he was a Christian. "But," he said, "while my father was a

Christian, my grandfather was a Confucianist." I know the definition of a Confucianist. He is one who believes in Confucius as a great teacher. He not infrequently goes into the temple to worship, and possibly he may go away a somewhat better man. He is one who recognizes Confucius as a sage and a teacher who presented to the world some very high ideals of living, and occasionally, if he is a real Confucianist, he may practice the teachings of his great teacher. But if I were to change that definition, and insert the name of Jesus in the place of that of Confucius, that would not be the definition of a Christian. So I put the question plainly, "What is a Christian?"

Some one answers, "A Christian is one who believes *in* Jesus Christ." I answer, "Not of necessity." The very devils may believe *in* Him. The ordinary wicked man in the world believes *in* Him. You may believe *in* Him and never *know* Him.

Then, you say, a Christian is one who believes *on* Jesus Christ, and to those of us trained in Christian homes, who know God's Word and have come to know Jesus Christ, the definition begins to be satisfactory. What is the difference between believing *in* and believing *on*? I was once in the mountains of Colorado going through some of the silver mines, and I came to one mine where the miners went down to their work by means of a rope, a windlass and a bucket. The miners would step into the bucket and be lowered by means of the rope and windlass to their day's task. I can imagine one of those men examining the windlass, and untwisting the rope and testing the bucket, then stepping back and saying, "I believe *in* these things



thoroughly. The windlass is strong, the rope perfect, and the bucket sure." That is believing *in* them. But that will not lower him to his day's work. However, when he lays hold upon the rope with his hands, steps into the bucket, and trusts himself to rope and windlass to be lowered into the mine for his day's toil, he believes not *in* but *on*, because he has committed himself to the rope and the windlass and the bucket. That is the beginning of the definition of what it really means to be a Christian. It is to believe *on* the Lord Jesus Christ. But even that is not a satisfactory definition; that is, it is not satisfactory to the man whose training has been defective and whose tendency is to doubt, and who is seeking light, because he does not attach as much importance to the little words in the Bible as we do who have come to know Jesus Christ in all His love and power.

A college professor defines a Christian thus: "Christianity is primarily a way of living; the Christian life is a life in which a man adopting the ideals of Jesus and reaching out for connection with the personality of Jesus finds himself increasingly becoming a true son *to* God and a true brother to his fellow-man." To me this is far from a satisfactory statement. I am not a son *to* God, but, by regeneration and sovereign grace a son *of* God (1 John 3:2); and then, again, according to this definition it would seem that one becomes a Christian as a result of personal effort in the reaching out after ideals, and striving to attain to them. If this be a true definition (which it is not), then there is little hope for the man with the ruined life, the shattered constitution, the depraved

and distorted will. Yet to all such Jesus came with tender compassion and matchless grace.

What is a Christian? May I give a negative answer? A Christian is not of necessity one who boasts of his ancestry. Kinship with the saved does not insure salvation. Your mother may have been a saint, your father a priest in his household, and you be lost. I am not unmindful of that Scripture which declares, "The promise is unto you, and unto your children, and to all that are afar off," but at the same time I know that my mother's faith cannot save me, and my father's righteousness cannot be imputed to me.

Again, a Christian is not necessarily one who subscribes to a creed. There are a great many people in the world to-day who are orthodox in their thinking and very heterodox in their living. From such turn away. You may approve of the creed of any or all evangelical churches and go to perdition. To be a Christian is not to subscribe to a creed, although that is not without its value.

Again, a Christian is not, of necessity, one who boasts of an early training. You may have been in the Sunday-school in your youth, you may have attended the church regularly, and you may have a sort of an apprehension of the Saviour in His beauty of character, but that is not enough. You must personally accept Him. You must be united to Him by faith. Your early training is not enough.

Again, a Christian is not merely one who uses the language of heaven. Taking the train one day at Vancouver, B. C., I traveled over the Canadian Pacific Railroad with a most interesting railroad porter,

who told me that he was a lay-preacher of the Methodist Church, and he gave evidence of his genuine piety. He told me of a man who was a passenger on a previous journey with him, whose conversation, he said, was beautiful to listen to. He said he spoke like a preacher, but one day he came on him unexpectedly and heard him swearing like a pirate, so his conversation did not amount to anything. It is not a matter of talking, it is a matter of living.

Again, a Christian is not simply one who claims membership in the Church. You may join all the churches in the world, if that were possible, and never know God. A Christian is not of necessity a man who boasts of his denominational connection. I think the denominations are valuable for many reasons. There are people who could feel at home only in the Episcopal Church, or the Presbyterian Church, or the Methodist Church, and I think it is a poor policy to put them in a place where they could not work satisfactorily, and could not find congenial companionship; but the denomination does not save. My mother was a most devout member of the Methodist Church. My father was devoted to her, and though he came from a long line of Presbyterian ancestry he did not attend his own church while she lived, but we went to the Methodist Church with my mother, attended the Methodist Sunday-school, and stayed there during the early years of my childhood as scholars in that school. When my mother died, at thirty-five years of age, my father naturally turned his thought again to the church of his ancestors, so we became worshippers in the Presbyterian Church in the city of Richmond, In-

diana. I have no doubt at all that if my father had died first, we should have continued in the Methodist Church, and I suppose to-day instead of being a Presbyterian minister I might have been a Methodist minister. So while I love the Church of which I am a member, and could not be happier than in association with that church and her ministry, at the same time I say that it is not the denomination that counts, so much as what is in the denomination in the way of the spirit of Jesus. It is not being a Presbyterian, or an Episcopalian, or a Congregationalist, or a Methodist, or a Baptist—it is being united to Jesus Christ, by saving faith that makes you a true follower of Him.

What is a Christian? Turn back to the statement of the text: "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Unquestionably this word was spoken with scorn concerning these followers of Jesus. They thought to heap insult upon the followers of Jesus by calling them Christians. But why did they call them Christians? For this reason: I am sure they must have reminded them of Jesus. I do not know a simpler definition than that to start with. If you are reminding your household of Jesus; if you are reminding your partner of Jesus; if you are reminding your friends of Jesus; if, in the look of your eye, the ring of your voice, the touch of your hand, there is the spirit of Jesus, then I should like to have fellowship with you, because I believe you have come to know Him, at least in part, whom to know is life eternal.

Recently I have read a most helpful definition of a Christian. It is in a remarkable book by Carnegie Simpson, entitled "The Fact of Christ." This book



strongly moved and influenced me. It says, "A Christian is one who responds to whatever meanings of Christ are through God's spirit brought home to his intellectual or moral conscience." And if that is an involved definition, I can sum it all up in this: A Christian is one who responds to Christ. I think that is the beginning of a great definition.

If one is to be a Christian there must first of all be a Sense of Need. Then there must be an Appreciation of Jesus; then there must be a Turning to Jesus; then there must be a Yielding to Jesus, and Accepting by Faith at His hand what He offers. When we read, "The gift of God is eternal life," it means "The gift of God is life of the Eternal." Because when God's life comes in—and that is always at the time of regeneration, and regeneration is at the moment of your acceptance of Christ—when God's life comes in, then you live in an entirely new sphere, under entirely different conditions. You can lift your eyes heavenward, and say, "Abba, Father," and you know Him.

But if you are seeking Jesus Christ you must not, under any circumstances, ignore sin, for sin can hide the vision of His face effectually. In a remarkable book recently published in America, entitled "Twice-Born Men," which was originally named, "A Clinic in Regeneration," a book which has the indorsement of men liberal in thought and also those conservative in their views, the following statement is made: "Until a soul hates evil little can be done; until it desires good—nothing." So you must hate sin. You must love the good. You must long to see Jesus. You must think of Him. You must give heed to His teach-

ing. You must yield to Him. You must obey Him.

What is a Christian? I have recently read in a great book that no one has a right to be a sceptic until he has first of all faced Christ, been fair to Christ, and then made an honest effort to follow Christ. You have no right to be a sceptic until you have given Him the consideration that is His due. Have you ever really considered Him? There can be no question of His existence, notwithstanding the fact that recently in a city in Germany a man spoke for hours to prove that Christ never existed. Then he and a number of men who believed in Jesus entered upon a discussion that lasted until three o'clock in the morning, in the midst of which women fainted and strong men cried out. But that does not disprove His existence. We know that He existed. Have you ever really considered Him? You know that the heavenly bodies were all in confusion until the sun was made the centre of all those great systems. With anything else as the centre the planets appeared to be swinging off into space, hither and thither, in great confusion, but when the sun was made the centre then there was perfect harmony. And there never can be harmony in your thinking, and certainly never harmony in your living, until Christ is the centre of your thinking and living.

Some one will say, "But I cannot know God." I understand your difficulty. He holds the winds in His fists. How could you take Him into your mind? In the hollow of His hand the seas beat and throb. How could you hold Him in your thought? God is infinite, eternal, unchangeable. He is omniscient, om-

nipresent, omnipotent. He speaks, and it is done. But when you turn to the New Testament, and hear Jesus saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father also"; and when you watch Him as He bends down and writes in the sands forgiveness for the woman at His feet; when you hear Him as he speaks the word that sets the woman free from her bondage of years; when you watch Him as He places His hands upon babies' heads, and sends them out to a life of blessing; when you stand near Him as He weeps in sympathy with Mary and Martha, and then speaks the words which liberate Lazarus from the grip of death; then, when you hear Him say, "He that hath seen me hath seen my Father also," what think ye of Christ? Not God—Christ, the Son of God.

There are those to-day who say they cannot understand the riddle of the universe. Very well, do not consider it. Go back to Him without whom was not anything made that was made. What think ye of Christ? Settle that question, and every riddle will have its solution, every problem will be solved easily. What think ye of Christ? That is the first question for you to answer. The Church may be destroyed, but you have Him. If you should lose your Bible, which is impossible, you have Him. Let one plant his feet by faith on the Rock of Ages, let him lift his eyes to see Him who is the Morning Star, and nothing can shake him. In the midst of all this Babel of criticism and confusion of tongues what think ye of Christ? You must face Him. No man can be an intelligent and honest sceptic until he has *fairly* considered Jesus Christ.

It is not altogether a question of ethics that we must consider. Ethics cannot save you. There has hardly been a nation in history with a better system of ethics than the Chinese nation. Take the sayings of Confucius and put them alongside the sayings of Jesus, and while of course they will suffer by comparison, still they will shine out brilliantly before you. But what has ethics done for China? They say that when one of the missionaries was translating the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans into Chinese, the Chinaman to whom he was dictating refused to continue the work. He said, "This is a picture of the Chinese people, and I will not have the story sent out to the world." I recently journeyed through China, and if ever there was a land where darkness is found and sin is rampant it is China. The Chinese have had ethics. The difference between the ethics of the Chinese and the teachings of Jesus is this: Confucius gives the ideal which to many is impossible of attainment; Jesus gives the ideal and the strength to reach it as well.

We saw a great company of people come up to one of the Buddhist Temples, in Japan, with care plainly written upon their countenances. They stood with bowed heads for a moment at the entrance to the temple, then they clapped their hands to attract the attention of their God. Then they threw their money into the receptacle that was there for the purpose. But I saw them go away with hearts still heavy, with care weighing them down.

Let me give you another picture. It is a picture of a company of men whom I met in Peking, China, in



the Congregational Compound, every one of whom had been through the Boxer persecution. One man told me that there was not a space on his body as big as a man's hand that was not scarred. Another told me that his wife was murdered and his children were torn limb from limb. Another was left for dead, was tossed into a well with the dead and dying men and women, but he climbed out and barely escaped with his life. But as these men gathered around us, with faces shining and eyes glistening with tears, they said that not for a single moment did Jesus forsake them. They were told that if they turned away from Jesus their lives would be spared, but they said they would die before they did that. On the one side you have the ethics without the strength to reach the ideal. On the other side you have the ideal with the strength to live up to it. It is a marvelous thing to be a Christian.

Do you know Jesus Christ? Then, if you do not, answer me this question: Have you ever really faced Christ?

Have you been fair to Christ? It is an awful thing to trifle about salvation, to treat the acceptance of Jesus as you would treat the purchase of a piece of property—to take Him, or not, as you please. This is a day when men are breaking away from the old paths of faith, when they are almost ridiculing the hope that made their mother beautiful, and their father strong. I am not disposed to treat otherwise than kindly the so-called believers in what is known as New Thought, or the believers in Christian Science. I do not treat unfairly the people who do not believe as I

believe, but I ask those who were once Christians, this: Did you give as much time to the consideration of the claims of Jesus as you have given to the mysticisms of New Thought? Did you ever put in as much time practicing the principles of Jesus? And I ask the Christian Scientists who were once members of a Church: Did you ever give as much consideration to the claims of Christ as you have given to Mrs. Eddy? Were you ever as faithful in practicing the precepts of Jesus as you are in practicing the things which are written in Mrs. Eddy's book? Were you fair to Christ?

Dr. J. M. Buckley, writing regarding spiritualism, said that many who have dabbled in spiritualism have lost their religion, still more their reputation, a great number their money, and a multitude their domestic peace; and this is also true of other forms of error. Have you ever fairly considered Him? He is marvellous. He is worth your consideration. "Men speak of Alexander the Great, of Charlemagne the Great, and of Napoleon the Great, but they never speak of Jesus the Great—they just say 'Jesus.'"

"Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest note in seraph's song,  
Sweetest carol ever sung,  
Jesus! Blessed Jesus."

"There is no name so sweet on earth, and none so sweet in heaven." He was great in His birth. When he was cradled in the manger the heavens hung out the brightest star to mark His birthplace. The angel choir sent their singers to sing, "On earth peace and good will towards men." Wise men came to wonder

and to worship, and the shepherds came to look and to love.

He was great in His name.

“Although I know Thee as the Son of God anointed,  
And hail Thee, Prophet, Priest, and King appointed,  
Still when I need Thee, Thou art nearest,  
And when I trust Thee, Thou art dearest,  
As Son of Man.”

He was great in His nature. So human that he could stand beside Mary and Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, and shed tears. So divine that he could say with that voice that made worlds leap into existence, “Lazarus, come forth,” Have you ever really been fair to Jesus?

He is great in His power. He has only to speak and the devils obey Him. He has only to speak and disease is gone. He speaks and death is conquered. He demands the best there is in you. You have trifled with Him. That is the reason you are not a Christian.

He is great in His influence. He lived thirty-three years on earth, and He has done more than all the philosophers of the ages to make life worth living, to make manhood strong and womanhood beautiful. One writer gives us a picture of Jesus passing through the country. People throng Him on every side. There are crowds ahead and crowds behind, but the difference between the crowd ahead and the crowd in the rear is this: Jesus has passed by the crowd in the rear, and they are leaping and rejoicing and praising God, with good health beating its way to their finger tips, with eyes flashing, and with renewed

strength. Jesus has made them whole. Ahead of Him is sorrow and distress, and suffering. He is still moving in the same wonderful way.

He is great in His message. There was never such a message as this. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," or this, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." He is great in His message.

All the world has testified to His greatness and power. Judas saw Him live, and said, "He is the Son of God." His enemies heard Him speak, and said, "Never man spake like this man." The centurion saw Him die, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God." Have you ever been fair to Jesus Christ? You must study Him, and when you study Him, He will thrill you. You study the story of a soldier, and it will make your pulses beat faster, it will make your eye flash with fire, it will almost make you feel that you are having a call to battle, it will almost make you feel as if you are marching on to victory. Study the stories of great saints, and you are rebuked for your own lack of faith, and you long to be more like Jesus. But study Jesus, and your weakness is gone and power is in its place; your blindness is gone and sight is in its stead. Have you ever been fair to Jesus? Most of you have not. I call you to Him.

I can give you the secret of overcoming doubt, and of mastering difficulty. It is this: You just start to live in Jesus to-day.

What must I do to be a Christian? It is an important question, it is a perplexing question, it is an eternal question. First of all, you must recognize

your sense of need of Christ. Nothing else can satisfy you but Christ. If I could throw off into space to-day a world a thousand times larger than this world, if I could hurl into space a world ten thousand times larger than this one, I could not fill space, but I know what can. "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea," God is there, He is everywhere. God pity the man who thinks he can satisfy his soul with money, or the woman who thinks she can satisfy her soul with pleasure. You must recognize your sense of need. God can satisfy it.

What must I do to be a Christian? Recognize the fact of sin. We have come to a time when people tell us that sin is only the thought of mortal mind. I think I might say, if I lived in a mansion, and shut my doors so that I could not see the men go staggering down the streets, if I stopped my ears so that I could not hear the shrieks of the women in distress, that I believed that statement. You may say what you please about sin, but whenever a man has heard, as I have, the shrieks of the dying, and the cries of the doomed; when he sees, as I have seen, men and women springing to their feet with the hot tears rolling down their cheeks to say "Pray for my boy, he is in danger," he must believe the fact of sin. Not the world's sin—your sin. You have to remember that your sin is the sin you have permitted, that you have enjoyed, that is to-day mastering you—you may call it by another name, but it is sin.

A distinguished Methodist minister of the city of Adelaide, Australia, preached on sin, and one of his church officers afterwards came into his study to see

him. He said to my friend, the minister, "Mr. Howard, we don't want you to talk as plainly as you do about sin, because if our boys and girls hear you talking so much about sin they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin." Then my friend took down a small bottle, and showed it to his visitor. It was a bottle of strychnine, and was marked, "Poison." Said he, "I see what you want me to do. You want me to change the label. Suppose I take off this label of 'Poison' and put on some mild label, such as 'Essence of Peppermint,' don't you see what happens? The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison." But do not be so foolish as to say there is no such thing as sin. There was enough sin to break God's heart, there was enough sin to send Jesus from heaven, to make Him say as He came down from the skies, "Lo, I come to do Thy will," and to make Him say, as during His ministry on earth he sat on the well-curb, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." And to make Him say, when He struggled in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will but Thine be done." You will never be a Christian until you know something about sin.

Again, accept the fact of Christ. Lady Henry Somerset said that when she was struggling in the darkness God came to her and said, "My child, act as if I were, and then thou shalt know that I am." She says that it brought her out of darkness into light. If you accept the fact of Christ, then accept the statements He makes you. First, concerning forgiveness. When God forgives sin, He forgets sin. He casts



your sin into the depths of the sea. When God forgives sin it is as if it were not. You may have seen that poem written by a factory girl, after being taken by her employer to see the Giant's Causeway. She had seen that text of Scripture, "I will cast all your sins into the depths of the sea," and she wrote this poem:

"I will cast in the depths of the fathomless sea  
All your sins and transgressions, whatever they be.  
Though they mount up to heaven, though they reach down to  
hell,  
They shall sink into depths, and above them shall swell  
All my waves of forgiveness so mighty and free,  
I will cast all your sins in the depths of the sea.

In the deep, silent depths far away from the shore,  
Where they never may rise up to trouble thee more,  
Where no far-reaching tide with its pitiless sweep  
May stir the dark waves of forgetfulness deep,  
I have buried them there, where no mortal can see,  
I have cast all your sins in the depths of the sea."

Then accept these statements regarding Christian life in the New Testament. To be a Christian is to be the strongest citizen, the greatest father, the truest mother, the noblest friend. As regards rulers—"Fear God, honor the king." As regards society, "Among whom ye shine as lights of the world" or, "Bear ye one another's burdens." As regards the unfortunate, "Be ye tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." As regards social life—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Ephesians, 6:1, 9. "And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing, threatening; knowing that your Master also

is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him." As regards judgment—I. Corinthians, 13: 4-7. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

There is a way out. If a man who has been born in a Christian home asks me the way to be a Christian, I tell him, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That is what he must do, and he understands what I mean. But he who is a sceptic, whose father was a sceptic before him, does not understand what I mean. So, just for a moment, let me speak to the man who is a doubter, and a sceptic. He asks, "What must I do to be a Christian?" I will suggest two things: First, just for the time being, put aside your doubts. Be honest and fair about it, and accept the Bible's statement as true. Just start with that, even though you cannot understand it. This book has stood the test of scholarship. So just accept the Bible as true, even though you cannot explain it.

Then begin with the very least statement of Christian truth, and live it. A woman came to me in the city of Providence, Rhode Island, and said, "I am a sceptic. I have for years been an out-and-out sceptic, but in these meetings I have a desire burning within me to be better. I have no conception of God and none of Christ, but I have a great sense of need."

I could see that she came from a home of culture, and I said, "Very well, then, will you follow me in this? For the time being just acknowledge that God is. Start with that." And she said, "I will." Then I said, "For the time being acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, and believe that He is." She said, "Very well, I can take that on the testimony of my friends, but I cannot understand it." Then I said, "Go back to your home and live what Jesus tells you to live. Live it with your husband, with your children, with your friends, then come and tell me the result." And before long I had a letter from her, in which she said, "Dear Sir, I have come into the strongest faith, I have come into the clearest light. I have come to know God, I have come to see Christ, and I know that I am a Christian."

## II

### HOW MAY I KNOW I AM A CHRISTIAN?

**H**OW may I know I am a Christian? The emphasis is on the word "*know*." God's Word is so marvellously complete that it never leaves us either in doubt or in despair. If you are troubled to-day, you have only to turn over the pages of His Word with your eyes open and your heart responsive, and you will find help. If you have been questioning whether or no you are a Christian, then you have only to turn to the pages of the Bible and study carefully the words spoken by Jesus, and the messages given by the Apostles, and you will know that you are a Christian; at least God meant that you should.

While holding a series of meetings in a Western city, one of the personal workers, passing through the audience, came to a gentleman who was quite well known as a Christian, and the personal worker, not knowing him, said, "Are you a Christian?" The gentleman said, "I hope so." The Christian worker said, "Can you not say more than that?" "What would you have me say," said he. The worker replied, "I would have you say that you know you are a Christian." The gentleman hesitated a min-

ute, and said, "I think it would be presumptuous on my part to say that I know I am a Christian. I question if I may know that with certainty until I see God face to face." It is not presumptuous for you to say that you know you are a Christian. It is a lack of faith to say anything less. You may know whether you have passed from death unto life.

How may you know? I. John, 5:13: "These things have I written unto you . . . that ye may know." What things? All that has preceded this statement in this epistle. Study the Epistle of John carefully, and you may be sure that you have passed from bondage to freedom, from darkness to light, and from death to life. The Gospel of St. John was written that we might know that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God; in the twentieth chapter and thirty-first verse we read: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His name."

What things were written? Go back to a careful reading of St. John's Gospel and study the statements carefully, the parables, the miracles, and when you see the water blushing into wine at the command of Him who holds the seas in the hollow of His hand, you will understand the statement. When you behold Nicodemus, with a heavy heart, pushing his way into the presence of Jesus, notwithstanding the fact that he had kept the law all his life, and was a member of the Sanhedrin; when you see him stepping out of bondage into light and freedom, and going away with faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the

Saviour of the world, you will understand. When you see the woman who steps out of sin into service, with her face all aglow, and her voice having in it the ring and the power of the command of Jesus Himself, as she cries, "Come, see the man that told me all things that ever I did," you will understand.

When you look into the eyes of the man who was blind from his birth, and see him groping his way through the darkness until he comes close enough to Jesus to hear the words of the Master as He commands that sight be restored to him; and, later, when you hear this man saying, as they ask him whether Jesus was a sinner or no, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not, one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," you will understand. When you look on that scene where Lazarus, who is dead and has been for four days, lies in his tomb, and you hear the sobs of his sisters, and you see the tears of the sympathizing Saviour, and you hear Him say with that marvelous voice of His, "Lazarus, come forth." He simply says "Lazarus," and the moment He speaks his name, the touch of life comes into the cheeks of Lazarus, and his eyes open. "Come forth," He says, and he stands upon his feet, bound with his grave clothes—then, when you hear Jesus say, "Loose him, and let him go," you will understand the statement of the Scripture. When you see Jesus passing through the shadows of Gethsemane and on to the scourging, and up to the smiting, and fainting beneath the cross; when you see Him crucified for the sinful world, saying, as He passes away, "It is



finished," you will understand what St. John means when he says, "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

Now, if the Gospel of John was written to prove the deity of Jesus, the Epistles of John were written that we might know that we have passed from death unto life. I. John, 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." So in this epistle of five chapters and one hundred and five verses, the whole subject of assurance is stated very clearly. Doubt is always disturbing. Any one who is in doubt and encourages that doubt, will be always unsettled. Sometimes doubt is due to inheritance. Your father was a sceptic, your mother a doubter, your grandfather or great-grandfather turned away from Jesus. You inherited your scepticism, but you need not hold to it. There is a way to overcome unbelief. Sometimes doubt is due to ignorance. If any one has shut his eyes to the Epistles of St. John, I do not wonder that he is in doubt about his salvation. If he has turned away from the Gospel of St. John, I do not wonder that he is questioning the deity of Jesus. Sometimes doubt is due to stubbornness. We simply will not be convinced. But any thoughtful person who will put aside his prejudice for a little, and accept the Scriptures as at least worthy of thoughtful consideration, reading with open eyes and open heart, will come in time to a clear conception of God, and a right understand-

ing of Jesus, as well as to an appreciation of what it means to be a Christian.

Out on the Pacific Coast an old gentleman wrote me a letter, in which he said, "For fifty years I have been an infidel. A sentence I read in the report of the meetings which appeared in the newspaper set me thinking. I made up my mind that I would spend ten minutes of each day honestly studying the New Testament. I only got through the third day, when I had accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour." Then he concluded by saying, "I believe that any thoughtful man who will consider carefully the claims of Jesus as recorded and substantiated in the New Testament, may come to know Him before a week has passed."

Doubt is always disturbing. But I do not know any doubt that disturbs us more than that which has to do with our assurance, for if we do doubt, it is because we have not fully accepted God's Word. If one does not fully accept God's Word, then he has little or no peace, because when temptations come, when trials beset him, when burdens bear heavily upon him, he has no such message as this: "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Or such as this: "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." If you do not doubt God's Word you may meet with all the storm and stress of life, and yet have peace. If you doubt God's Word, you have no power. Indeed, the secret of power is our close identification with Jesus Christ. It is not a question as to who I am, or what I am, it is a question as to whether or not I am absolutely surrendered

to Him. He has promised to live in me, and to speak through me.

Up in the northern part of the State of New York lives an old man who was disappointed in politics, and who, in early life, had also been disappointed in love. He made his way out from the city of New York to the Adirondack Mountains, where he lived as a hermit. He was embittered with the world, and he would allow no one to enter his house if he could prevent it. But one night, when a terrific storm was sweeping through the mountains, three men came to the hut, and rapping at the door, they sought admission. When the hermit saw them standing without in the storm, he did not have the heart to turn them away, and they came inside. When they had had the evening meal and were seated before the fire talking about the events of the past, one of the men saw an old violin on the shelf above the fireplace. He said to the hermit, "May I play that?" and the old man rose, and taking the violin in his hands, fondled it affectionately and said, "I don't think I could allow you to do so. It is my companion of years. It took me a long time to learn to play it, and I don't want a stranger to handle it." They talked a little while longer, and then, because the evening was long, and the hours dragged wearily by, the hermit finally consented to allow the stranger to play. He took the violin, and without even tuning it, put it to his chin, drew the bow across the strings, and soon the instrument was singing like a nightingale, crying like a child, and sobbing like a man in distress. The violinist, who was a master, played on and on. He

played "America"; he played "Nearer My God to Thee," and the old man dropped his face in his hands, and sobbed as if his heart would break. When the violinist finished, the hermit took the instrument, placed it on the shelf above the fireplace, and said, "I never knew before what music was. I never knew what was in this instrument. I shall never touch it again."

But all this harmony was not in the violin, it was in the master. For the man who put that violin to his chin and drew the bow across the strings, was a famous player, the greatest violinist of his day. The story suggests the secret of power. No matter how poor, how uncultured, we may have power if we know God's Word, and are absolutely surrendered to Jesus. Doubt God's Word, and you are shorn of power.

Again, if you doubt the Word of God in the matter of assurance, there is no such thing as constant victory. Of course, you are not seeking an easy journey through life; if you are, God pity you. Great souls graduate from the school of conflict. The greatest musicians have been men who have almost had broken hearts. The greatest leaders of men are those who have come out of darkness after a great struggle. You are sure to have trials, for men are born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward, but you will have no victory if you doubt God's Word. With His help you may accomplish all things, and endure every sort of trial. I do not know anything that disturbs a Christian more than to be without assurance. If you lack assurance of your salvation, you are on

the mountain top to-day and in the valley to-morrow. You are preaching with power this morning, and to-morrow you are questioning if you were ever a Christian. Your influence in your home is like heaven to-day, and to-morrow you are hurting everybody about you. Without assurance, you are first hot and then cold, possessed of power, and then without it. "These things are written that ye may know."

Our lack of assurance is revealed in so many ways. Sometimes in our praying. How many times have you prayed, "And save us at last." That is certainly un-Scriptural. God's promise is a present promise. John, 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me *hath* everlasting life."

Salvation is not a matter of slow progress. It is not stopping one sin to-day and another to-morrow. It is not just cleaning up on the outside. A man swears because there is something wrong within, he steals because his heart and life are not right. He hurts his wife because he is a brute, and he is a brute because of an inward condition. All the cutting off of individual sins cannot touch the trouble which is within. A woman was one day sitting in Central Park, New York, while her little girl was playing on the grass not far from her. Suddenly a great St. Bernard dog came bounding through the park, barking furiously, and rushing past this little girl. She naturally became very much frightened, and sprang into her mother's arms, sobbing as if her heart would break. The mother spoke soothingly to her, but she would not be comforted. Finally, when

everything else had failed, the mother turned to her little child, and said, "My dear, stop your crying, the dog has stopped his barking." The little girl looked around with her sobs still uncontrolled, and said, "Yes, mother, but the bark is still in him." And that is the trouble with the average man. Becoming a Christian is not cutting off one sin to-day and another to-morrow. Becoming a Christian is stepping instantly out of darkness into light. When S. H. Hadley staggered drunk and in rags to the penitent form, and knelt there asking God's forgiveness, he rose up a Christian. So let us not say again, "And save us at the last."

Sometimes our lack of assurance is revealed in our thinking. The average Christian expects to stand before the great white throne. He expects, some day, that the books will be opened, and he believes that when the books are opened it will then be decided finally whether he will stand on the right hand or the left. There is no thought that you could have that is more un-Scriptural, more unfair to Jesus, more dishonoring to God's plan of salvation. John, 5:24: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, *and shall not come into condemnation.*" And the "condemnation" is "judgment"! Romans, 8:1: "There is therefore now no judgment to them that are in Christ Jesus." You will never appear at the great white throne, for your judgment is passed if you are a Christian. You have your faith in a Saviour who appeared in your behalf before God, and bore the penalty of your sins. He staggered under the weight of your sins, "and the



Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." You will not stand at the judgment because He stood there in your stead.

Do you know you are a Christian? You may know, first of all, by your confidence in Him, and in His Word. I. John, 4:15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." You have only to determine whether you have confessed Him as the Son of God. I. John, 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." You have only to decide whether or not you believe that Jesus Christ is born of God, and is really the Son of God. I know that I am a Christian—and I speak for you now, as well as for myself—because I have confidence in His Word. He told me, and I believe Him.

A friend of mine, who used to live across the sea, told me that his father lived on the estate of an English nobleman, a man of high standing, and a great friend of the late Queen of England. This titled gentleman was not strong in constitution, and, although the food upon his table would tempt a king, he could not partake of it. But he would slip away to a little house where dwelt an old woman, a saint of God, by the name of Betty. Betty had known this nobleman from the days of his youth, and she loved him. She knew his illness, and she baked for him a peculiar little oat-cake, which the nobleman would eat at her house, and which he said prolonged his life. One day the Queen came to visit this noble-

man, and while she was staying at his house, he went down to this old-fashioned woman and said, "Betty, Her Majesty, the Queen, is at the palace to-day, and I would like you to come up and see her this evening." You may well believe it was a day of excitement for Betty. She went through all her boxes, and put on the best garments she had. Then she took a little, old-fashioned shawl, which she pinned down over her head, and made her way up to the great house. When she appeared at the door, the servant looked at her, and said, "What is it?" and Betty said, "I want to come in." "But you can't come in," said the man, "The house is full of guests, and the Queen is here. The master cannot see you now." Old Betty stood there a moment, then she said, "But he telt me to come." The servant was not easily persuaded, but finally he went and saw the master of the house, and he was told to admit the old woman.

They brought her into the drawing-room, and the nobleman led her over to the Queen, and said, "This is Betty. She has helped to keep me alive, and I thought I would like to have her see you." Old Betty dropped on her knees, and was almost ready to kiss the hem of the Queen's dress. Then she withdrew, and when she came to the man at the door, she looked up into his face and said, with a good deal of snap in her voice, "I telt you he telt me to come." My blessed Saviour told me if I was weak He would give me strength; if I had doubts, He would banish them; if I would confess my sins, He would pardon them. I believe Him. He told me to come, and so I came.

"Just as I am without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bids't me come to Thee;  
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come."

That marvelous book, "Twice Born Men," was written by an English novelist, and is really a story of the work of the Salvation Army in the slums of the great city of London. One of the chapters is entitled, "The Lowest of the Low," and that is the name given to the man whose story is told in the chapter. May I describe it? His mother was a drunkard, his father was dead. When he was a baby his mother used to take him to the public house, and to keep him quiet she would dip her finger in the glass of gin and rub it across his lips, so that before he could walk he had the taste for strong drink. When he was but a little boy he was staggering drunk upon the streets of London. Besides being a drunkard, he was a thief. He was all that was bad. He was one of those shivering, dirty creatures that creep along the streets of the great city, with naked feet, with clothing in rags, and with the rain wetting his hair. A little, pale, blue-lipped, shivering child, more like a homeless dog than a motherless boy.

In his young manhood he became a soldier in the British army, and while there he broke the laws of the army and was sentenced to prison. When he came out of prison he was discharged from the army in disgrace, and he then drifted into the very lowest depths of iniquity and sin. Finally, when he could bear his burden no longer, he came to the Salvation Army hall to listen to the hymns. He heard the tes-

timonies, and he listened to the officer who stood upon the platform asking poor lost men and women to turn to Jesus. One night, in the midst of a great crowd of fallen men like himself, he rose up and staggered to the penitent form. Dropping down on his knees, he buried his face in his hands, and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and quick as a flash he was changed.

At once he began to seek for his old mother. She had gone deeper into sin than ever. We have heard of the father seeking for the prodigal son; but here was the son seeking for his prodigal mother. At last he found her. When he entered the room where she lived, he found it little better than a hovel. He walked across the room, and putting his arms around his mother, he kissed her, and said, "Mother, I have come to take you back to the home I have prepared for you." She would not believe him. Her mind had become affected by her sin, but she went, pleased as a girl. In God's own good time her mind was restored, and to this day in the city of London, she sits by her son's side, a changed woman, and presides at his table. He never has married. He said he was married to his mother, and she to him. When the people say to him, "What does it all mean?" He always makes this reply, "God gave me another chance." Oh, what a salvation, what a Saviour! I know if He can save that man, He can save me.

There is another reason why I may know I am a Christian. Because of my obedience and love to Him. I. John, 2:3: "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." What are

## HOW MAY I KNOW I AM A CHRISTIAN? 39

His commandments? First, follow Him. If you are following Jesus, you will know whether you are a Christian or not. A gentleman once made his way over the Rocky Mountains in the company of a guide. They camped for the night, and during the night there was a heavy fall of snow. When the gentleman rose in the morning, he said to the guide, as he stepped outside the door, "Somebody has passed in the night," for he saw a footprint in the snow. But the guide looked down and studied it carefully, and he said, "Not one person, sir, but fifty." They had all stepped in the leader's footprints. That is being a Christian, just following Jesus when you have accepted Him.

If we are to obey Him, we must go out after the lost. I do not know anything that would strengthen your faith so much as this. I shall never forget one night when my associate, Mr. Alexander, and I, with a party, went to one of the Salvation Army halls in the city of Philadelphia. It was midnight, but a crowd thronged the building. Mr. Alexander had been leading the singing, and I had done my best in telling the story of Jesus, then we went through the audience to try to rescue the perishing. As I went through the crowd I saw Mrs. Alexander—I saw her down in the crowd with her arms around a fallen woman, and I heard her whispering in her ear something that is too tender and sacred to repeat. Then I saw that fallen woman rise to her feet, and stagger down to the penitent form. Pretty soon she brushed away the tears from her eyes, and said she would accept Christ as her Saviour. I looked at Mrs. Alexander, and her face was radiant. And you could not persuade me

that any woman who had turned away from Christ to the fascination of society could have in her face the look that she had. I know what can strengthen faith. It is to follow in His footsteps.

A man was making his way over the mountains through a terrible snow-storm. He gradually got weaker and weaker, until at last he stumbled and fell. He said to himself, "This is the end. I shall never be found." He was too weak to rise, but as he fell his hand struck the body of another man who had fallen in the same place. This first man was unconscious, and the man who had just fallen rose to his knees and, bending over the prostrate form, began to chafe his hands and to rub his face, until by and by the man's eyes opened. He had saved another's life, but he had also saved himself, for the exercise had kept the life in his own body. And when you have a passion for souls, when you go seeking the lost, when you lift the burdens of others, your own vision of Jesus is clearer, your own hope of eternity is stronger, your own assurance of salvation is greater.

We may know that we are Christians, by doing His will. John, 7:17: If any man will do His will, he shall know . . . ." So do not sit in doubt, begin to do something. Do not sit in darkness, push out into the light. Do not mourn because you are so weak, strengthen somebody else.

We may know whether we are Christians or not by our habits. I John, 3:9: And this is a mysterious Scripture, which seems to condemn us—"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed re-



## HOW MAY I KNOW I AM A CHRISTIAN? 41

maineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Does not that condemn you? But a literal translation will make the passage read thus: "No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin." "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

There are three marks of the Christian as touching sin. The first is a desire for quick recovery. If you are a child of God and find yourself sinning, you will want to get back to God instantly.

Second, a willingness to confess to the people whom you have injured. You cannot be unjust to your children, and atone for it by saying, "I will be kind to-morrow." You must make the wrong right. Many a home has been hurt, many a husband's influence has been injured, many a mother's power has been lost, because they were not right with those about them, and did not confess the wrong. I do not know anything that makes a home more like heaven than just to say you are wrong, when you are in the wrong. Say to your wife or children, "I didn't treat you fairly. You will forgive me, won't you?" That is the way to hold your boy.

Third, a readiness to confess your sins to God. I do not know how far to go in a public confession to the world. I do not know how much I am justified in placing my reputation in the hands of men whom I am not sure I can trust. If I have a sin in my life, I am not quite sure that I ought to go to this man or the other, and tell him. But I do know this: if I have a sin in my life, I must go to God, and make it

right with Him. I may know I am a Christian if I follow closely the leading of the spirit of God.

I may know that I am a Christian by my interest in others for Him. I. John, 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." When you become a Christian you are changed, but the old characteristics which came to you in natural birth are very likely to remain in your disposition.

For example, here is a man who is very selfish; when he becomes a Christian he must fight that thing. Or here is one who is especially intellectual, and when he becomes a Christian it is very easy to understand that he will be rather disposed to be critical of the man who is dull and slow in that respect. Here is another who is really possessed of greatness. He is apt to be harsh in his thinking of another man who is not to be compared with him in this respect. Another is very weak. He has very little sympathy with the man who is possessed of strength. These things all enter into Christian character, but there is a way to help out in the matter. Paul gives it to us. Colossians 3, beginning at the 12th verse: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Now, here is the way: "And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." It is the old idea of the Oriental garment. This was a loose

garment which hung from the shoulders, and as the Oriental walked across the fields, or over the mountains, this garment flapped in the wind. So the apostle says, "Just put a girdle round you, and hold it tight to you." What is the girdle for the Christian? Love—love that stops criticism, love that lifts the burden, love that reaches out the hand to help, love that speaks a word of kindness and gentleness, love, true love, that is the mark of a Christian.

In "Twice Born Men" the author tells of a Salvation Army officer who was known as the "Angel Adjutant," and from what we read, she was worthy of the name. She loved Jesus, and she loved the lost. One day in her wanderings through the slums she came to a man who was known as "Old Born Drunk." This man used to go into the factories, selling little sheets of paper giving the betting news from the public houses round about. The Angel Adjutant had always been accustomed to sinful men, but she says until she saw him she did not realize the hideous and repulsive abomination to which vice can degrade. This man was the child of drunken parents. He was conceived and born while his parents were mad with drink. When he first opened his eyes they taught him to drink. When but a baby boy he used to sleep off his drunken stupor. When a boy able to walk he used to stagger through the streets in an intoxicated condition. He was a true "Miserable." He was short and thick-set in stature, misshapen in face and form—a creature whom ragged children used to mock at, and the very dogs of the streets used to bark at. One day the Angel Adjutant met him, and looking into his old,

sin-scarred face, said, "You don't look very happy." He made no response. She came a little closer, and said again, "You don't look very happy." Still no response. She came closer still, and putting her hand upon his shoulder, said, "I would like to help you. I love Jesus. Jesus loves you," and there was a trace of a tear in his eye.

She found out where he lived, and she went into his home that was vile in the extreme. His wife was as great a drunkard as he. But there was one bright spot in their lives. They had a son, and this little boy was kept away from the home, so that he, too, might not become a drunkard. They had fallen into the lowest depths of sin and shame, but one night they made their way, at the request of the Angel Adjutant, to the Salvation Army meeting. They heard the testimonies, and, still drunk, they staggered to the penitent form, and got down on their knees. It seems that a man called Joe had just risen to give a testimony, and "Old Born Drunk" knew him. And while still on his knees the man called out, "Oh, Jesus, I would like to be like Joe." Then turning his face to his wife, he said, "Do you think I could ever be like Joe?" And the Angel Adjutant, coming nearer, said, "Jesus can make you like Joe." And the old man rose up, staggering from weakness, and said, "Then I will take Him." And his life became perfectly beautiful. His temptations were terrific. One day he made his way to a public house where his business called him, and the men there tempted him to drink. When "Old Born Drunk" refused to take the liquor they jeered and mocked him. When he still

refused, one man picked up the glass of beer and threw it in his face, saying, "If you won't take it inside, take it outside." And the old man, who had been born drunk, and to whom the smell of alcohol would be a terrific temptation, just brushed it away, and looking up with a smile, went on with his work. When he came down to the end of life, the Angel Adjutant came to him, and bending over him, she said, "Is it all well with you?" And the old man looked up with a smile, and said, "I am without fear."

I know this—there is among us not a person who would ever doubt himself to be a Christian if he would reach out to help the suffering. Such a spirit of service and love will drive away all doubt and you will know that you are a Christian.

### III

## HOW MAY OTHER PEOPLE KNOW THAT I AM A CHRISTIAN?

**I**F a man tells me that he is a Christian, and I want additional and, as a rule, satisfactory evidence, I need only go to the people with whom he works, or those whom he employs, or to his wife and children, or even sometimes to his enemies, and the proof will be forthcoming. St. Paul wrote wise words to Titus when he said that he must live circumspectly before the people, so that they would be ashamed because they had no evil thing to say against him. How may others know that I am a Christian? A friend of mine, coming up from a Southern city, was crossing from Jersey City to New York when the ferry was the only means of transit. His son, who was traveling with him, suddenly left him, and walking across the deck of the ferry-boat, grasped the hand of a man and shook it vigorously. When he came back his father said, "Who is your friend?" "Oh," he said, "I did not know who he was, but he was a Mason. I knew that because I saw the badge on him, and we Masons always try to shake hands when we meet each other." Then he said to his father, "Wouldn't it be a fine thing if every Christian



had a badge so that you would know him? So that if you were on a boat and saw him with this badge on, you could take him by the hand and say, 'You are a Christian, are you not?' " As a matter of fact, every Christian has a badge, and Jesus gave it to him.

When I told one of the reporters of a daily paper that I expected to preach on this subject, he said it reminded him of a Sunday-school teacher, who was trying to give to his class a definition of a Christian. He said, "Now, boys, why do people say I am a Christian?" and one little fellow put up his hand, and said, "Please, sir, because they don't know you." But the best reason why others should know that I am a Christian, is that they know me, and if they cannot say that I am a Christian after they know me, then I had better go back to the penitent form and begin again, for there must be something radically wrong with my Christian living.

I never have been so impressed with the Bible as I have been in these past days. The Bible has an answer for every difficulty, and is a secret source of strength to us in all our need. So when I propose this question, How may others know that I am a Christian? I turn to John, 13:35, and I read, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." By what? If you will turn to the thirteenth of St. John and read the thirty-fourth verse you will know: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." It is not when you have criticised one another, not when you are harsh in your judgment against another, not when you are unforgiving,

but, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." So other people may certainly know whether or not we are Christians. Does your husband think you are a Christian? Stop and think a moment. What would he say? If I should stop your brother and ask him, "Is your sister a Christian?" what do you think he would say?

One day while turning over the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, I found that there were always distinguishing marks given to the children of Israel, and by means of these marks they could always be known in the multitude. They were distinguishable particularly in three ways: first, by what they ate; second, by what they wore; third, by what they said. It would seem to me that those might still be distinguishing marks for a Christian.

The things he eats. I do not of necessity mean the things he eats to increase his physical strength, but the books he reads, the conversation to which he listens, the influence under which he puts his life. All of these things enter into the character, just as the food you eat influences the growth of your body and causes you to be strong.

Then, the things we wear. A garment is like one's habits. I can tell very easily whether you are a Christian or not, if I know your habits. You tell me what you are in the habit of thinking about and I can tell you whether you are a Christian. You may say that you are an officer in the Church, but that would not amount to very much if your life were not right. You may say that you are a minister in the

Church, but that would not amount to very much if your life were not right, and you were not a consistent Christian. Tell me your habits, and I will tell you whether you are a Christian. Your habits are like the garments of Israel.

Then they were known by the way they spoke, for in the olden times you could distinguish the children of Israel by their manner of speech. If I could stand in your home where you could not see me, and hear you speak to your servants, I could tell whether you were a Christian. You might be the president of the missionary society, and your name might count for everything in Church and social circles, but I would know whether you were a Christian or not by the way you spoke to those about you. I would know whether you were a Christian by the way you spoke to your children, by your conversation with your husband. It is often by what we say that we reveal whether or not we are possessed of the spirit of Jesus.

All these things enter into the formation of character. Let us remember this, that as we stand up before the world, the things that we do or say, or think, speak either for or against Jesus Christ.

In one of the New England cities one of the wealthiest society women was taken seriously ill. Her name had been on the church books, and she was a Christian. In this sickness she came to the brink of the grave, and then, as by a miracle of God, she was raised up again. When she recovered, she naturally gravitated back into her old social position. One day there was a special function given in her honor, and as she came in and was being received by all her

friends and congratulated because she had been restored to health, her hostess said to her, "Now, just as a pleasant diversion for the rest of the afternoon, it has been decided that we will have a little bridge whist." This friend who had been ill had always been the leader in the company, but what do you think she said to her hostess? She said, "You really must excuse me. I am not criticising the people who do these things, for we must decide our line of action for ourselves. I know you won't think me rude, but when one has had a glimpse into eternity, when one has realized the shortness of life and the certainty of death, and then comes back again into the world, they cannot do the same things they did before with pleasure. You must please excuse me."

What do you think happened? Every society woman in that room and in that home came forward to take her by the hand and say, "It is a splendid decision." Some of them greeted her with tears. Others who knew her better put a kiss upon her cheeks. That is the position for a Christian. I do not think it is necessary for one Christian to sit in judgment upon another, and say, "If you do not do the things that I do, you are not a Christian," but I am positive that every Christian should stand before the world and say, "I am a Christian, and by the things I say, and do, I must show it to my friends."

If this picture of Israel in the Old Testament is significant, it is especially true that in the New Testament we find a striking description of ourselves. Turn to I. Peter, 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;

that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." It is a great thing to know that we have been called to show forth the praises of Him, and I am sure the time has come when, in Christian living, people ought to see Christ in us, when they ought to see the beauty of holiness in us, when they ought to see all the charm of consistency in us. I know when the churches will be crowded, I know when people will flock into the Kingdom, I know when the ministers' hearts will be cheered: it is the day when we begin to live Jesus Christ.

There must be a marked difference between us and the world. Therefore, there must be a change in the living of many Christians. Do you remember the story of the man in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones? They would bind him, and he would break his bonds. They would come near to the tombs and hear him shrieking, and they would run away in terror. But one day Jesus met him, and He broke his bonds, and ordered the evil spirits to come out of him. Then we read: "And he departed, and begun to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." Is that not a change? There must be a change in your living.

A friend of mine was one day preaching a sermon to a great congregation, when a well-known woman turned to her husband, one of the most distinguished men in the community, and said, as the minister pleaded with them to lift their hands and accept Jesus Christ. "My dear, could you not lift your-

hand now?" And he made no response. She whispered to him again, "Would it not be a good thing to lift your hand now?" Still no response. As they walked out of the church, she said to him, with a note of pathos in her voice, "I had hoped that this would be the night of your decision." But he never answered. When they came into their home and were seated together, he said, "My dear, you asked me to lift my hand, and I made no response. I do not mean to be rude to you, but you are a Christian, and I am not. I do not want to be unkind, but tell me wherein our lives differ. You play cards, and I also play cards. You go to the dance, and I go to the dance. You visit the theatre, and I also visit the theatre. For the life of me I can see no difference in our living. Now, you will not misunderstand me, and God knows I would not be cruel to you, but where is the difference in our living?"

While assisting in a great series of meetings in Minneapolis, I was called back to my church. As I made my way to the train, an old Welsh preacher followed me to the station, and said, "I heard you speak about Christmas Evans to-day. Here is a book of his sermons. He was the greatest of Welsh preachers. If you have time, read the story of that man in the tombs." I took the book. During the journey I was storm-stayed for twenty-four hours, and I read the little volume through until I came to the story of the man in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones, until Jesus spoke to him, and the devils left him. Christmas Evans described his coming home. He told how the children, looking through



the windows of the house, see a man coming up the road, and they say, "Mother, father's coming," and the mother springs to the window to look, then runs to the door and closes it, saying, "Children, keep still, your father is a maniac." And they close every door and window, and the children, looking through the chinks of the window, say, "Mother, it is not father. Father used to come bounding up the way, this man is walking. Father used to come shrieking, this man is coming quietly." And the mother said, "Keep still. It might be your father." You can almost hear their hearts beating, when there is a hand on the latch, and it does not yield. Finally, there is a rap at the door, but they do not answer. Then they hear a voice they have not heard in years. It was the voice she had heard when he had asked her to be his bride. It was the voice he used when God gave them their first child. They heard him saying, "Mary, open the door. Let me come in. I have seen Jesus." Christmas Evans says she springs to the door and throws it open, and when he comes in he brings heaven with him. This is not a fanciful story, it is a picture. There must be a change in our living if other people are to know that we are Christians.

Again, I suggest that they will know we are Christians by the fruit of our living. Matthew, 7:20-21: Jesus said: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." What are the fruits? Read Galatians, 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Sit down and think; take that verse of Scripture and pore over it, and see if you have these things in your life: *Meekness*. A man once told me that that word "meekness" as used in the Bible was exactly the same word that was used in Xenophon's *Anabasis* to describe the taming of horses. So that a meek man is a tamed man. A gentleman said to me once, "I cannot be a Christian because I have such a temper." Why, that is the very reason why you should be a Christian, if your temper is in the hands of Him who holds it as a man holds the reins of his four-horse team, guiding the team, and taking the great chariot up the mountain-side. Are you a tamed man?

*Gentleness*. I know it is very easy for people to become provoked in their own homes. It sometimes happens because we are worn out physically, because the circumstances that face us are so trying. But if you are in the habit of becoming provoked, then listen while I tell you just as candidly as I can, if you continue that habit you will reveal to the people round about you that you are not a Christian. *Gentleness!* Why you can detect it in the very atmosphere of a room when you step into it.

Down in a Southern city one of the ministers came to me to say, "I want you to make a call this morning," and I told him I really could not go, for I had been preaching almost day and night, and I was physically and mentally tired. I said, "You must not ask me to make calls upon people, because, in the first place, I do not think I could do myself justice, and

in the second place, I do not think I could help the people." Then he said, "Oh, but you will make this call, for it will help you." As we drove out to the house, he said, "The woman you are going to see has been in bed twenty-four years." The moment I crossed the threshold of the room I found that it was like heaven. I walked across the room, and took the aged woman by the hand, framing in my mind some word of comfort. I started the sentence, she just looked up at me and said, "Oh, don't pity me. Of all the women living in this city I am the most highly favored. It is true that God took my husband. It is true that two years ago he took my last boy. It is true that I am the only one of all the family left, and it is true that for twenty-four years I have not been out of this room. But lying here upon my bed I have learned what it is to have joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and goodness and faith." And I could not see her for my tears. I walked out of the room, saying over and over, "She is certainly a Christian." Are you?

People may know that we are Christians by the badge which we wear. It is love. This love of which I speak is not a sentiment. What is this love? It is that spirit that enables us to lift other people's burdens, to put cheer into other people's hearts. When one of my friends was hopeless and helpless through drink, when he was without a friend in the city where he used to write his check for many thousands of dollars, when he thought that the very best thing he could do would be to end his life and step out of all his misery and wretchedness; as he walked the streets

of the city where he was an honored citizen in other days, a man, splendidly dressed, stepped up to him, and said, "Where are you going?" And my friend, who for years had preached the gospel, said with a sob, "To hell, sir." And this man threw his arm around his shoulder, and said, "Well, you are not." He said, "I will help you." He was the private secretary to the president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and he was as good as his word. That day, in the city of Baltimore, my friend turned his face back to Jesus Christ. What if his friend had said, "Well, aren't you a disgrace to humanity." What if he had said, "Isn't it a shame that you have trampled on your father's name, and forgotten your mother's love. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." I think my friend would have been in perdition to-day.

Are you a Christian? Tell me. You know whether you are or not. Love is that spirit that pities the weak, and tries to make the weak strong. Love rejoices with the strong, and is glad that God has entered into such a life. Love is that spirit that helps the suffering. If any of you, who are Christians, want other people to know that you are Christians, start at once to some shut-in person and speak a kind word, exemplifying the spirit of Jesus. Love is unselfish. Love always lives for others. Are you a Christian?

In November of last year a nurse in one of the city hospitals in Philadelphia left her position to become a nurse in the leper hospital. She was a beautiful girl; she had graduated with highest honors at one of the women's colleges, and had been for some

time head nurse in the accident department of the hospital. But she had the passion of Jesus for lost people, and she made up her mind that she would help the lepers. So she said, "I will go to the leper hospital and give my life to the nursing and comforting of these poor, helpless ones." On the day that she left the people gathered around her to say good-bye, and they could scarcely see her for their tears; but she smiled back at them, and waved her hand and said, "Good-bye," as she stood on the rear platform of the train. And now she is away in that leper hospital, helping the hopeless, holding in her arms poor little children, stooping down to put her hand on the head of a disconsolate woman, bending over to whisper a verse of Scripture in the ears of a broken-hearted man. Possibly you cannot go to the leper hospital, and perhaps God never meant that you should. But there is one near you whose heart is breaking. You could speak to that one. There is another whose reason is almost gone. You could speak to her. In other words, a Christian is a man or woman carrying the sunlight of heaven in the face, and in the spirit and influence like Jesus. Are you a Christian?

I was in the slums of New York one day. I thought I would just go down and see what people were doing there. I saw children playing, and men fighting. I heard women cursing, and I had to put my hands to my ears to shut out the awful jangling, confusion, and noise. Suddenly, about three blocks away, I heard a brass band playing, and stopped to listen. They were coming down the street and I waited. As they marched past me every child stopped its play-

ing, every man stopped his wrangling, every woman stopped her cursing, and the whole air was cleared up by the music. I think, if I am a Christian, that whenever I go into a home, that home ought to be the better for my coming. If you are a Christian, every time a person stops to talk with you, he ought to be able to say, "Isn't it just helpful to meet her? The very look of her eye makes me better. The very sound of her voice convinces me that I am not what I ought to be." Are you a Christian? Do other people think you are a Christian?

Others may know that we are Christians when we have the Spirit of Jesus—the spirit of compassion. That word "compassion" means "to have a passion with." It means to be sorry for, to put yourself in another's place. The first time I ever really came to know S. H. Hadley, of the Water Street Mission, I was holding meetings in Jersey City, and I wrote over to him, saying that I would like to see the slums of New York, for I had never seen the dark side of a great city. I received word from him to come over, and at midnight Mr. Hadley and I went into the lower part of New York, which was then wretched, indeed. We walked through the slums until two o'clock in the morning. I can shut my eyes now and see the faces we saw that night, with all hope gone, faces of women with all beauty lost. I can hear the voices that had in them the shriek of the lost, and I can see Mr. Hadley, as he sat in a place of vile repute with all the inmates around him, telling the story of Jesus. As we came out of that awful place I walked down half a block with him, and started back to Jersey



City. He went on towards his lodging house, and I saw him stop beneath a gas-light, and I could see the great tears trickling down his face. I went back to him, and he took me by the hand and said, Oh! Oh! Oh!" and I said, "What is the matter?" "Oh, he said, "Think of it!—the suffering, the sinning, the lost." Then he turned to me and said, "Brother Chapman, always preach the Gospel." That is the spirit of compassion of which I am speaking.

If we have the spirit of Jesus in forgiveness, we will prove our faith in Him. "Forgiveness" you say. "Why I have exercised it for years. Here is a man that has injured me, and I have forgiven him fifty times." Well, that is not enough. How many times should we forgive? If you are a Christian, I can tell you exactly how many times. Turn to Luke, 17:4-5: "And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Then, as if the apostles had thrown up their hands at that, they said, "Lord, increase our faith." In Matthew, 18:21-22, I read, "Then came Peter to Him, and said, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but until seventy times seven." Have you ever done that?

We can show to people whether we are Christians or not by the way we pray. That is the spirit of Jesus—morning, noon and night He prayed. One of the most distinguished preachers in the world told me that when his father was a boy he came to his mother one day, and said, "I want to go to a place

that is just slightly questionable. I have never seen anything of that sort of life, and I should like to go just this once." And she said, "No, you cannot go." And the boy, in a wilful spirit, said, "Yes, I will go." "Very well, then," said his mother, "you go, and all the time you are gone I'll pray for you." This distinguished minister told me that his father went away, and came back at two o'clock in the morning. He saw a light in his mother's room, and looking through a chink in the blind, he saw his mother on her knees with her face buried in her hands. He crept round to the door, and heard her saying, "Oh, God, watch over my precious boy this night, and don't let him sin." The boy stole into the room, and dropped down by his mother's side in prayer; was that night converted and became a great preacher. Others may know whether we are Christians if we have the spirit of Jesus in prayer.

Then they may know that we are Christians if we have the influence of Jesus. A gentleman in my room one day called my attention to the first chapter of St. John, which shows the influence of Jesus. The thirty-sixth verse—they saw Jesus; the thirty-seventh—they followed Jesus; the thirty-ninth—they abode with Him; and the forty-first—they brought others to Jesus. That is the influence of Jesus of which I am speaking. If we are true Christians, we will preach the principles of Jesus. Do you remember that night described in John, 13:25-30, when Jesus was sitting at the table with His disciples, and He said, "One of you shall betray me," and they said, "Lord, is it I?" And He said, "It is the one who dips in the

dish with me." And he turned to Judas, and said, "What thou doest, do quickly," and Judas rose and went out. Here follows, I think, one of the most beautiful things in all the ministry of Jesus. Verse 28: "Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor." That, I think, is beautiful—Jesus was shielding him to the very last.

Paganini, the great violinist, was once seized as a suspect and thrown into prison, where he was confined for some years. As a favor, they gave him a violin with only one string, and by incessant practice on this violin, he acquired an execution so masterful that he was able to play upon the one string more wonderfully than others could upon four. He could make this instrument sing like a nightingale, or cry like a child in distress. When Paganini died this famous violin was taken to Genoa, where it now lies in a glass case. One day the wood of the violin was discovered to be rotting, and it appeared as if the violin would not last for many years longer. The people were greatly agitated, and they called a meeting of scientists to discover the best means of preserving the precious instrument. The scientists decided that to preserve it for a few years longer it should be taken out once a year and played on for half an hour by one of the best masters. The wood would feel the thrill of the old master, and the decay would be arrested.

If you want to be possessed of the spirit of Jesus, and have all the power that Jesus meant you should have, you will have to serve Him. It will not always be easy, but it will pay. Up in the Alps, in a certain spot, there is a monument erected to a guide who had perished when attempting to make the ascent of the mountain. One of the finest things I have ever read is the simple inscription on the stone, which reads: "He died climbing." It is a noble tribute to an heroic man. He was in the line of his duty. His face was forward and upward. Up, and up, and up we must go, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto the things that are before—climbing. Thus others beholding us will know whether we are Christians or not.

We owe the best to Him. An artist once painted a picture. Other artists had colors richer and rarer, and painted more notable pictures. He painted his with one special color in prominence; there was a wonderful red glow on it, and the picture made him famous. Other artists came to study his work, and they said, "What in the world makes his picture great?" They asked the painter, but he only smiled and said, "I cannot tell you," and he worked on with his head bent low. And one went to the Far East and brought costly pigments, and made rich colors, and with these painted, but after a time the picture faded. And they searched and searched, but could not discover the secret of the old artist's painting. They said, "It is in the way he uses his brushes," and they studied the way he used his brushes, but they could not imitate his work. The old artist painted

on, and on, and his work got more beautiful, but the artist grew whiter and whiter. At last one day they found him dead before his picture, and they said, "Now we will discover his secret," and they searched his studio, but could not find it. But when they dressed him for the grave they found it—over his heart was a wound which must have been there all his life. But Death, which seals all things, had closed the wound. The artist had painted with his heart's blood. That was the secret. The very best you have you owe Him.

"Paying a visit to sorrow's abode,  
 Helping a burdened one o'er a rough road;  
 This the sweet thought making duty delight,  
 Turning the shadows of gloom into light—  
     Just to please Jesus.

"Giving a smile or taking a hand,  
 Leading lost feet to the fair Better Land;  
 Doing and thinking and hearing and seeing,  
 Eating and drinking and waking and being—  
     Just to please Jesus.

## IV

### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

*"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Rom. 1:16.*

**I**T has always seemed to me that this text of Scripture shines like a star in the midnight darkness of this chapter, for it has been truly said that not in all the world's history has there ever been given such a marvelous description of sin as the apostle gives in the first chapter of this great Epistle. It is the description of the human heart, and especially of the unregenerate heart. Yet here, in the midst of all the darkness, we find a perfect gem of a statement: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The apostle's eyes must have flashed as he dictated it; his face must have flushed; his fingers must have twitched nervously as he realized the power of it. I imagine that he quite understood that it was to be the power to overthrow the influence of culture which was not consecrated, when he said, "I am willing to declare it even in Rome." Rome was then the centre of culture in the known world. He knew that there would be power to overcome prejudice, for he said, "It is the power of God unto the Jews as well as unto the Greek." Surely he realized that in



it there was an influence that would overpower wisdom when it had not been yielded to God.

I question whether there has ever been a stronger statement than this: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." I think the best reason for the apostle's using the expression is that he knew it was the power that would overcome sin. He knew that by the Gospel story the slave of sin would be set free. He knew that the man blinded with passion would be given freedom. There is music in the very sound of the word, "Gospel." It means "Good news." It is good news to the man who, for years, has been blinded by scepticism. It is good news for the woman who, for years, has been overtaken with a fault. It is good news for the man who thinks he is hopeless. It is the greatest news the sinning world has ever heard, and the unregenerate man has ever received. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

The text is marvelous in its words. First, take the word "*Gospel*." Sometimes we hear people say that all a minister needs to do is to preach the simple Gospel. There is no such thing as a simple Gospel. The Gospel is the greatest conception of truth the world has ever heard. The Gospel is the story that makes all the angels in heaven stand in wonderment. The Gospel is the story that all the saints in glory will sing about. There is no such thing as a simple Gospel. It is the most wonderful story that we could ever hear.

The next word is this—"Christ." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." "Christ" is His

anointed name; "Jesus" His earthly name. "Christ"—the name that will make all the saints in glory sing praises unto Him who has redeemed us by His own precious blood.

The next word in the verse that causes us to stop and think is "*Power*." "For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." It is the power of God. Nothing can stand before it, and I care not what may be your condition in sin, nor what may be your position in doubt, if you give this Gospel a fair chance it will break the fetters of sin, and drive away the gloom of doubt.

The next word is "*Salvation*." "It is the power of God unto salvation." There is a three-fold salvation. In second Corinthians, 1:10, we read: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." So that if you should say to me, "Are you saved?" and I should say, "I have been saved," that would be a Scriptural answer. And if you should say to me again, "Are you saved?" and I should say, "I am being saved," my reply would still be Scriptural. But if you would say to me yet again, "Are you saved?" and I should answer, "I shall be saved." It would be quite as Scriptural as my former replies. For I have been saved from the penalty of sin; I am being saved from the power of sin; and I shall one day be saved from the presence of sin. "Salvation" is a marvelous word. Salvation comes because of the death of Jesus and our acceptance of Him. I try to allow no one to go beyond me in giving emphasis to the power of His death. Yet I sometimes think we do not sufficiently

emphasize His wonderful life. So the Gospel means a great deal more to-day than some would think.

First of all, then—*In His life He is our Example.* I. Peter, 2-21: "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example." Have you ever noticed He did not say that he left us a pattern? What is the difference between a pattern and an example? A pattern is a thing that must be reproduced in exactness. An example is that which may be reproduced in spirit. I might not be able to live just as Jesus lived, because He was in the Orient and I am here. But I may be able to live in the spirit of Jesus. And what I am trying to preach is this—that the revival we need is a revival which will teach men how to practice the principles of Jesus in their business, in their homes, in their pleasure. He has left us an example. So that in His living He is a part of the Gospel story.

But that is not all. *In His death He is our Redeemer.* There are two sentences that I think men ought to realize in these days. This is the first one: "The wages of sin is death." God has never changed that. There is another sentence: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." God has not taken that back either. But there is still another Scripture. "So Christ was once offered." And still again, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture." Whenever I find one minimizing sin, I always find him minimizing the atonement. Whenever we find them saying that sin is only a mistake, I find them saying that men may be saved by their strength of character rather than by Calvary. It is only by the death of

Jesus that we may be saved. He paid the penalty. He suffered in our stead. He offered Himself for you and for me, and there is no other way to be saved. On the authority of God's Word I make this statement. You can find no other way to be saved than this—an absolute surrender to God in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. So, in His living He is our example. In His dying He is our Redeemer.

But that is not all the Gospel. *In His burial He is our Scapegoat.* In the fourth chapter of Romans, twenty-fifth verse, we read this—"Who was delivered because of our offences." Then, if you will turn over to Leviticus, you will find the scapegoat of the Old Testament. This is Jewish, of course, but may be used as an illustration. The priest stood with his hands upon the head of the goat, confessing the sins of Israel, and the goat was led away into a land where no man lived, bearing the sins of Israel. If Jesus died for my sin upon Calvary, how does He meet my sins? He becomes my scapegoat, bearing my sins away as far as the east is from the west. Into the depths of the sea they are cast. Behind God's back they are thrown. So that when one comes to me drunken, or impure, or dishonest, I can look him in the face and say, "I have a mighty Saviour. He has answered for your sin on Calvary, and will bear away your sins." In His burial He is my scapegoat.

But that is not all the Gospel. *In His resurrection He is my Justification.* "He was delivered because of our offenses." But read Romans, 4:25 again:

*"He was raised because of our justification."* We have a song we sometimes sing, which is in many ways great, but which is wrong in one particular. We sing, "He tore the bars away, Jesus, my Saviour." It is a picture of His resurrection, but He did nothing of the sort. He did not tear the bars away. Suppose you put a man in prison, and he is in for five years, and three years after his imprisonment he tears the bars away, and escapes. The law can put him back again. But if you put a man in prison, and he serves the full term and comes out, the law cannot put him back again. Jesus never tore the bars away. The time was up. He had fulfilled the conditions. He had met all the demands of the law, and the stone was rolled away, and He came out answering for my justification. That is the Gospel.

What is justification? Justification means that you stand before God as if you never had sinned. Justification means that your sins are put behind God's back, and forgotten. Justification means that you are before Him with an absolutely clean record. Not in your own thought, possibly, and not always in the judgment of men, possibly, but in the judgment of God. That is justification, and that is the Gospel. In His Resurrection is my hope.

But, let me say, that is not, by any means, all the Gospel. *In His ascension He is our Head.* If He is the head of the Church, then two things must be true. First, He must direct the Church. Second, we must honor the Head. I am quite sure that the man who attacks the Deity of Jesus, putting Him on the same plane with Confucius and Bhudda, puts a barrier in

the way of spiritual progress that is absolutely insurmountable. He is the Head of the Church. If He is, then let the Church follow His direction. If my head wills one thing, and my foot does another, there is confusion. I can tell you when cities will be made better, when righteousness will prevail in politics, when the laboring man will receive his just dues, when the capitalist and the merchant will be treated fairly. It will be when we follow the leading of Jesus. In His ascension He is our Head.

I do not wonder St. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." He knew that it reached down to the lowest and climbed up to the highest.

But that is not all the Gospel. *In His coming He is our HOPE.* In these days, when people's hearts are breaking, in these days when cities are going so far from God, in these days when I see men unjustly treated, in these days when the plans of men fail, I lift my eyes and say, "Oh, Lord Jesus, how long? How long?" When He comes, every wrong of earth will be set right. So, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Some one may say, "Doesn't the belief in the Lord's second coming make you a bit of a fanatic?" In answer, permit me to say that holding to anything will make you a fanatic if you press it out of proportion. A friend of mine, a great preacher in Boston, lived out of the city in the summer-time. He used to go away to Boston early in the morning, and he would say to his little children, "I am coming home on the five o'clock train. I want you to meet me." While he was gone in the city, the children would play—as children will—and their frocks would



become soiled, and their faces, too, but whenever they knew their father was coming they would hurriedly clean up and hasten to meet him. One day my friend, as he left his home, said, "Children, I am going to the city. I do not know when I shall be coming home, whether it will be at ten o'clock or at noon. I may not be back until six o'clock, or I may not come until to-morrow. You watch for me." And he told me that he did not come back for a week. But the children met every train, looking for him; and this kept them clean for a week. I think this Hope of Jesus' return will change one's living. If I believe that Jesus is coming soon I will not be unscrupulous in my dealing with men. I will not be sinful. I will not be unclean. I will not be impure. I will not be faithless.

In His living He is my *Example*.

In His dying He is my *Redeemer*.

In His burial He is my *Scapegoat*.

In His resurrection He is my *Justification*.

In His ascension He is my *Head*.

But in His coming again He is my *Hope*. And so may we say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

## V

### THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM

*"Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" 2nd Sam. 23:15.*

**I**N the Old Testament times a well of water was a fortune. When Caleb's daughter was married and she received her inheritance from her father, he gave to her a South land; then there came a time when she came to her father and said, "Thou hast given me a South land, I pray thee give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs." If you are familiar with the Old Testament story, you will also recall the story of the wells of Abraham. These wells were most interesting. Cattle stopped to drink at them, the fields were watered by them, and the weary traveler, journeying across the plain, refreshed himself with their waters. Then the enemies of God's people came and filled in the wells, and the cattle had no place where they could drink, the fields were parched, and the traveller had no place of refreshment. Then, later, Isaac came on the scene. "And Isaac digged again the wells of his father." It would be a great thing if some of the young men of to-day would dig again the wells of their fathers—wells of prayer and Bible study and holy living.

Turning to the New Testament, we find another famous well mentioned. It is Jacob's well. I remember travelling across the plain and just as the sun was at high noon I stopped at Jacob's well. I let down a little vessel into the well and drew the water up, and was refreshed after a weary journey. Then I remembered that this was the place where Jesus sat, weary with His journey, but where He forgot that He was hungry and thirsty, when there came into His presence a woman who was a sinner. Would that more of us were like him. I have made up my mind in these days that it is the man who preaches with a passion who wins souls. I have come to the conclusion that, when everything else fails, a passionate passion for souls will surely win. I suppose, as a matter of fact, that many of us have done very little in winning souls for Christ. A friend told me recently that he had won for Christ the chauffeur of a very distinguished Christian. The chauffeur had been in this Christian's employ for some time, and yet it was another man, outside the household, that led him to Christ. I have been told that every great awakening has its distinguishing characteristics, and I believe I know the characteristic of the awakening which may soon be upon the Church of Christ throughout the whole world. It is this—a personal effort on behalf of souls. I learned this lesson as I sat waiting on the edge of Jacob's well, away there in the land that Jesus loved.

But the well of Bethlehem is, I am sure, the most interesting of all the Bible wells. The waters flowed out from it through the valley, and the valley was beautiful. "I know another well of Bethlehem," Dr.

Talmage, our great American preacher, used to say; "it was digged by the light of a star, and the people who came to this well of Bethlehem drank and were satisfied, and drinking, they never thirsted again." From this other well of Bethlehem has gone a stream of blessing to make the whole world rich. It is of this well that I speak, as well as of that well that David had in mind. You know the story. It is in this chapter where the text is found that we find the story of David's mighty men, and three of them have to do with my text. David is in the cave of Adullam, and it is a cave of gloom. The well of Bethlehem has been taken by the enemies of God's people, and these three mighty men are waiting upon the old servant of God, when, suddenly, I think, I see his face in the gloom. It is first white, then red, his lips are trembling, his tears are falling; then the text is spoken: "Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate." And the instant he sobbed it out the three mighty men were away, down the hillside, over the plain, and into the midst of the enemies of God's people. So astonished were they that they never lifted a hand to stop them, and making their way up to the well of Bethlehem, these three mighty men dipped up the water, and hurried back again through the ranks of the enemy, and up the hillside and into the cave, and placed the water before David. Then he did a splendid thing. He said, "This water is gotten at too great a cost. I will pour it out as a sacrifice unto God." This is the story, and this is the setting of my text.

David is a picture of many a Christian who is in the gloom. Why do so many Christians get into the gloom? First, of all, because they neglect the reading of God's Book. If, as a Christian, you are not in the habit of studying God's Word, and absorbing its truths, you are drifting into the gloom. There once came an English clergyman into a conference I was directing, who said to me, "I can give you in five sentences the secret of Bible study for each day. (1) Study it through. Never begin a day without mastering a verse. (2) Pray it in. Never leave your Bible until the verse you have studied is part of your very being. (3) Put it down. The thoughts that God gives you, write on the margin of your Bible. (4) Work it out. Live the truth you get in the morning through all the hours of the day. (5) Pass it on. Seek to tell somebody else what you have learned. Many a man has gotten into the gloom and lost his grip of the Bible, and lost his passion for souls, just because he has forgotten how to pray.

Then there is another reason. Many a Christian gets into the gloom because of an inconsistent life. There are earnest, sincere Christian people who say that those who preach the old-fashioned doctrines of the Church are making a mistake—that what is needed to-day is the sounding of the social note and the preaching of a social Gospel. I have a good deal of sympathy with them, but I also know that this is true, that when a man begins to emphasize the social note beyond its place, he has a tendency to forget the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. And I have a con-

viction that if we lose sight of Jesus upon the cross, we are in great danger of drifting.

Nevertheless, although I hold these old essential doctrines, I am preaching to-day with all the strength that God will give me, that it will not do for a man to be a Christian on Sunday, and live inconsistently every other day in the week; that the time has come when it will not do for one to say he is a follower of Jesus Christ and oppress the poor and stop his ears to the cries of the needy; that the day has come when a consistent life is an absolute necessity, and if you are inconsistent, you will drift into the gloom and be shorn of power.

But I think there is another reason why men are in the darkness, and it is because of secret sin. We had a man in one of our public schools in a great city who, seeking to illustrate a certain truth before the children, drew the picture of an eye on the black-board. It was so perfectly drawn that the child sitting on one side of the room thought the eye was looking at him, and the child sitting on the other side of the room thought it was fixed on him. Into every part of the room the eye seemed to be looking, and the little children became so nervous and excited that the picture of the eye had to be erased. And I should like to say to you who sin, that there is an eye that is upon you, an eye you cannot paint out. "Our secret sins are in the light of His countenance." Because my ministry has largely been with men, and I have heard their stories, there is not a sin in the life of a man that I do not know. I know its beginning, sometimes small; its progress, usually slow; its awful



end. I know it not from personal experience, but because of what other men have told me. When the express went thundering across the Tay bridge in the night time the bridge went down, and when investigation was made they found there was a blister in one of the girders of the bridge, which had been passed by, but that blister had weakened the bridge and caused it to fall. And I know that every man who has in his heart, or life, a secret sin, is in the gloom.

There are many reasons why we have lost power. I need not speak of them, but I will speak of a Saviour, who is mighty to save. I will tell the story of a Father who is infinite in His love. If you are shorn of power, if you are feeling that you would give all to get back to the old place of fellowship, I say that my God will forgive you all your transgressions. "When God forgives, He forgets." I made that statement in my old church in Philadelphia, and at the close of the service a man came up to me and said, "Is it true that when God forgives He forgets?" When I gave him the Scripture, he said, "I am a physician, and I believe I am a Christian, but in my youth I committed a sin. My wife does not dream of it, and I would cut off my right hand before I would tell my boys. No man in this world knows it, but hot, scalding tears have burned their way down my cheeks as I have confessed it to God. Do you think He can forget it?" Yes, indeed he can, and if you have forgotten God, if you have neglected your Bible and prayer, if you have sinned, if you have said, "I am not a Christian," I want to tell you of One who, when

He forgives, always forgets, and I call you out of the gloom to-day—I call you to Jesus.

But what do you think the text really means? “Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of Bethlehem.” Do you think that David was thirsty? I do not think it was water he wanted. It is probable that he might have heard the drip, drip, drip of the water, as it trickled down the sides of the cave, and he might have scooped up the water with his hand to quench his thirst, but I hardly think he was thirsty.

One of the first operations performed in the city of Chicago for appendicitis was performed on a young New Englander who was in Chicago on business. He was taken to one of the largest hospitals. This young fellow came from the State of Vermont, where the springs are abundant, and it is a beautiful thing, as I very well know, when you are thirsty, to get down on your knees and dip your face in the water of the spring. When the operation was over, and this young Vermonter was coming out from the anæsthetic, they saw his lips move, and the nurse, bending over, heard him say, “Water.” She said, “Doctor, may I give him a drink?” But when she brought it he would not take it, and they heard him whisper again, “I want a drink of water.” The doctor bent over him and said, “Is it water you want? There is water right here.” By this time the young fellow was beginning to gain consciousness, and as he looked up into the doctor’s face with a smile, he said, “It is not this water that I want. I want a drink from the spring at my mother’s door, back in Ver-

mont." It was not water he wanted at all, he wanted his mother. He wanted to feel the touch of her hand upon his face.

I think that David in the gloom, with the sounds of battle about him and enemies pursuing him, thought his way back to the old days when he was by the well of Bethlehem, and the days when he wrote that Psalm: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters"; and he wanted to be back in the old days where there would be no sound of battle, where he could drink and be satisfied, where he could hear God speak. Oh, for the old days! I, too, would like to go back to the old days when the Church had power, when the ministers stood in their pulpits and preached as if they were the very servants of God, when the people sitting in the pews looked up into the face of the minister, and questioned, sometimes, whether he was in the flesh or out of the flesh. I would like to go back to the old days, such as they had in New England when our great Jonathan Edwards was preaching on sinners in the hands of a mighty God, and when men started to the front of the church, saying, "Have mercy, the Day of Judgment is upon us."

I want the days to come back when men will love God's Book, and when they will believe again in prayer—prayer that can take heaven by storm, prayer that can travel like a wireless message to your boy in Australia. A friend of mine took to gambling in the city of New York, and broke his mother's heart. He hurried across the continent to get away from her,

and came to San Francisco. He went from bad to worse, and, finally, realizing that he had gambling debts he could not pay, he said, "I will kill myself." He made his way upstairs into the little room he occupied, and in despair he threw himself down upon the bed. As he did so he jarred a little shelf on the wall above his bed, and a book fell down and struck him. Being impatient by nature, he hurled it across the room, when suddenly he remembered what Book it was, and he crossed the room and picked it up. God, in His goodness, allowed the Book to open at the proper place, where, written across the margin, was this message: "Dear boy, you will never get away from your mother's prayers," and my friend dropped on his knees then and there, and gave himself to Christ. I saw his old mother afterwards, and she said, "I knew he could not get away from my prayers." I want the old days to come back again, when people will believe in prayer.

I was riding along a street in Washington, when, as I looked out of the window I saw our Capitol building for the first time. I said, "What is that?" And the gentleman who was sitting with me said, "It is the Capitol." It was a beautiful moonlit night, and I put my face against the glass, that I might see the building better, when this friend said, "That is the home of the nation." But I do not think that is the home of our nation, and certainly it is not the hope of our nation. I would rather take you into a home in New England, where, until recently, an old, white-haired man used to gather his household together, morning and evening, where he would open

the old Book and would read out of it, and then would mention the name of every child he had in prayer, and his household would go forth to work, feeling almost as if angels were hovering round them, and would lie down to sleep at night, feeling almost as if ladders were reaching up from their pillows to heaven. I want to go back to the old days of family prayer.

May I close with this question: "Will the old faith stand?" I know the answer. You must judge, first of all, by the Scriptures. They never have failed, and I know they never will. I was in the room of a blind man in the city of Cincinnati, a very celebrated man, and he told me that he was on his way to New York City, when, in the morning, he found there was a mist about him. He called the porter and said, "Is it dark?" "No," said he. "It is light, and the light is shining in your eyes." He said, "Put me out at the next station, for I must be going blind." He made his way back home and called in a celebrated specialist, and said, "Doctor, what is the matter with my eyes?" The doctor looked, and then called in another specialist, and they looked together. Then the doctor took him by the hand and said, "Shall I tell you the truth?" He said, "Yes," thinking he would only have to sit in the darkness for a while with bandaged eyes, but the doctor said, "Your optic nerve is dead, and only God Himself could make you see again." And sitting upon a couch in the room, he sobbed as if his heart would break. All this time the blind man had been walking up and down before me in his drawing-room, then he came near to me and said, "What do you suppose I did?" Do you

suppose I cursed God because my eyes were gone?" "No, sir," he said, "the moment they told me my optic nerve was dead I felt the loving touch of Jesus Christ, and I heard Him saying, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' and He has been better to me than His word." Will the old faith stand? I like that Scripture which says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word"—never!

I have no contention with the man who does not agree with me in my message. My time is too short to enter into any sort of an argument with the man who may differ from me theologically. The only thing I want in these days is to be given the privilege of saying four things. First, that God loves you. Second, that Jesus Christ died to save you. Third, that His Word standeth fast. Fourth, that whosoever will may come, and I bid you come to Him now.



## VI

### THE LOST AXE-HEAD

*Text: "And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim." 2 Kings 6:6.*

**B**UT you say, "Wait a moment. Iron will not swim." You may say that I cast a piece of iron into the water and saw it sink like lead, and you may say that the statement of the text is contrary to all natural laws. And then, you might go on to assume that if this text is untrue, the story of Elisha may be untrue; and if you take Elisha out of the Old Testament you can very easily part company with Elijah.

But you have, evidently, forgotten the statement of the text: "And the man of God said." We are not dealing to-day with natural law; we are dealing with the supernatural, and I am presenting to you a story out of a book in which the marvelous is always coming to pass. I should think it would be a very easy thing to make an axe-head swim as compared with holding the winds in your fist, and God can do that.

I should think it would be a very trifling matter to bring a bit of iron to the surface of the water when compared with holding the seas in the hollow of your

hand, and God can do that. The iron did swim. God said it in His Word, and God always speaks the truth. I like the setting of the text. The house of the sons of the prophets seems to have been too small and so the sons of the prophets go out to secure material for its enlargement. It is a kind of coöperative piece of work, and these men, as they go along, are carrying axes, and with the axes they are chopping down the trees. One man seems to be poorer than the others, for he is working with a borrowed axe. It may be that the axe was faulty. It may be that the laborer himself was over-zealous—we do not know—but when he was working away, chopping his tree, suddenly the axe-head slipped away from the handle, bounded into the water and sank out of sight. And the man, in great embarrassment, turned to the man of God, who said: "Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim."

This illustration is one of the miracles of Elisha. There is a very sharp contrast between the miracles of Elisha and those of Elijah. Elijah seemed always to do great things, Elisha the common-place, every-day things. Elisha and Elijah walk along together. They come to Bethel, to Gilgal, to the fords of Jordan, and Elijah turns to Elisha, saying, "Better tarry here, for the Lord will take me away from you," and he would not. And the sons of prophets came out and said, "Elisha, better tarry here, for the Lord will take away your master." And he said, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

And Elijah, looking upon him, said, "Elisha, what

will you have me give unto thee?" And he said, "O master, a double portion of thy spirit." And Elijah said, "You have asked a hard thing, but if you keep your eyes fixed upon me you shall have it." They came to the Jordan, and Elijah took off his old mantle and smote the waters, and, dry-shod, they went over on to the other side. Suddenly the skies brightened and a chariot of fire and steeds of fire appeared. Then the whirlwind was on and Elijah was caught up by the whirlwind and Elisha, overpowered for the moment, stood looking at him. Then, stretching forth his hands, I imagine I hear him shout, "My father, my father. The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." And Elijah took his old mantle, leaned out from the whirlwind, held it for a second, and then dropped it. It came fluttering down through the air until it was upon the shoulders of Elisha. And he was ready. And note this, he did not take the master's mantle and wrap it around him and say, "Isn't this comfortable?"

Many a man has received the Holy Ghost for power and lost Him, because of this spirit. Elisha did not wrap his master's mantle around him and say, "I shall take this back and keep it as a matter of pride." Many a man has received a blessing and lost it for this very same reason. He used the master's mantle in the same way that Elijah had used it. He smote the waters, then came over unto the other shore. Now, from this time on his miracles are of the homely sort.

He hears of a certain place, where there is a bitter spring, and he sweetens the waters and makes the

place more habitable and the land more fertile. He learns of a certain woman who is troubled because of debt, and he goes into her home and asks for her possessions. She has only a cruse of oil. He tells her to go through the village borrowing empty vessels. When she brings them, he tells her to secure a still greater number. When she brings them he tells her to pour out the oil into them. This she did until they were filled. Then she sold the oil and paid her debts and her home was filled with rejoicing.

He is told by the Shunamite woman that her boy is dead. He comes down from the mountain, makes his way across the plain, goes up into the prophet's chamber where the boy is lying, and prays, and the boy lives again. This is like Elisha. And so when the man finds only the axe-handle in his hand, and the axe-head gone, it is only natural for him to turn to this man of God and say, "Alas, Master, for it was borrowed." And for the man of God to say, "Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim."

If this were the only instance of the kind in the Scriptures, I might question it, but the Bible is full of stories like this. I turn to the New Testament and I find there the story of the woman who for eighteen years had been bowed with infirmity. She could in no wise lift herself up. She had spent all her living on physicians, and could be healed by none of them. She was a dwarf in stature. I have imagined her sometimes, when alone in her home, when no eye could look upon her, trying to straighten out

her arm, and she could not. I have imagined her trying to lift up her poor body, and she could not. But one day Jesus sees her stooping over in her infirmity, and with all His divine power He speaks, saying, "Woman, thou art loosed," and she stood up. The iron did swim. He is always bringing these things to pass. I see a woman taken in her sin. She is being hounded by men who are professing great virtue themselves. They are attempting to stone her with stones and she is running like a frightened deer. I imagine her stumbling and falling. I imagine a stone striking her. I see her rise from her fallen position, with the blood blinding her eyes. She is hastening on when, suddenly, she sees Jesus. I think I see her fall at His feet.

The law condemned her, the world stoned her; but Jesus forgave her. And when they came up to Him they found Him bending over and writing in the sand. They say that when the woman came to Him as an impure woman, He bowed His face because He was a pure man, and he wrote abstractly in the sand to hide his confusion. I do not believe it. I am sure it is not so.

There is an old legend which declares that when Jesus bent over to write, He was writing the name of a man who stood in the crowd, and as this man leaned forward, he read his own name. And the rest of the sentence was this: "So-and-So is himself an extortioner." And the man drops the stone in his hand and goes. Jesus writes another name. "So-and-So is himself an adulterer." And fifty men drop the stones in their hands and flee away.

He continues writing name after name, and man after man leaves, until at last, lifting up His eyes and seeing only the woman at His feet and the men all gone, He says, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Doth no man accuse thee?" And she said, "No man, Lord." And He said, "Neither do I condemn thee." And she stood up and was free. And the iron did swim.

But if any of you are saying to-day, "But that is in the Bible," then I will take an illustration out of modern time. At a meeting in a city in Canada there came into the audience a man blinded by drink, held captive by drugs for twenty-nine years. He had been a slave to opium and to cocaine and to morphine. One of our workers spoke to him. His heart was touched. And I saw that man walk down in the presence of four thousand people, climb up on to the high platform by my side, and say, "Friends, I am climbing up out of hell, and you must help me." And although he was clad in rags, there came up to him a beautifully-dressed woman, who said, "My husband will take you to our home this evening." The other day there came a letter to us from Canada, written by the Presbyterian minister, who said: "I wish you could see our man. His face is shining. I wish you could hear him speak. He is filled with the power of God. I wish you could have heard him lead our meeting last night. Scores of people were impressed and many of them converted." And the iron did swim.

"Ah, but that is Canada," you say. Then let me take you to another land. One of the first days



that we were in Melbourne, Australia, I heard a rap at my door in the hotel. I said, "Come in," and a frightened face appeared for a moment at the door. I have never for a moment gotten that face out of my vision. A note was handed in, and I read, "Dear Sir: I have been a drunkard for four years. I have tried my best to overcome the awful disease and passion, but I cannot. Please pray for me." Then the person appeared at the door again for a moment, and she said: "I came just to see that you got it in your hand," and was gone. I have scarcely passed through a single night since, that I have not seen her face, sometimes with a look of stolid indifference on it, sometimes it seemed to me bathed in tears, and she almost on the point of decision. One night I saw her stand in one of the churches and, with trembling tones, say that through the day she had gotten the victory, that under the power of the singing she had seen Jesus, and with the memory of her sweet mother she had made one great effort by the help of God. She was in our meetings after that, clothed and in her right mind. All the look of womanhood back, all the power of virtue back, all the strength of Christian grace back. And the iron did swim.

But my message is also for the man and for the woman who is a member of the Church. There is many a man in the Church to-day, and many a woman, too, in the predicament of the man who lost the axe-head. The man with the axe-handle in his hand could have gone on, apparently chopping wood. He could have raised the axe-handle and brought it down, and the man fifty feet away would not have known that

he was working without an axe-head. But I was raised in the country, and I know that it is a good deal more difficult to swing an axe-handle without a head, than to swing one with an axe-head. And it is a good deal more difficult to keep up the form of religion, than to live the real thing, and many of you are keeping up the form only. You are working without an axe-head.

Who are the people that are doing this? First, some of us who are ministers. There was a day when God spoke through our ministry. There was a day when, rising to plead, there was a passion in our words. There was a day when, as we proclaimed Jesus Christ, men and women flocked to the mercy seat. There was a day when, as we preached, we could see Him, and people knew that we saw Him. And now we preach the same sermons, and we use the same illustrations, and we use the same methods, and there is no power. And there are Church officers, who, in times gone by, testified for Jesus Christ in their homes. They had a family altar. They spoke the name of their children in their petitions. They went to Church, and as they rose to speak, everybody gave them the closest attention. And to-day the altar is gone, and power is gone with it, and they have not been at the church nor at the prayer-meeting for a month, and they have no power. There are Christian people to-day whose experience in other days could best be told in the words of the hymn, "O happy day that fixed my choice." And if there is any other hymn that could write their history, it is this one:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were on present far too small.  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.”

You are without power to-day. You are not a soul winner. You have lost your influence over your husband. You have lost your influence on your children, you have lost your influence in the Church and in the city. The axe-head is gone. No power. What is the axe-head? Well, I should say the axe-head may be the conscious presence of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, the Word of God burning in your life and ringing in your message. And you have lost it. The searching part of the text is this: Where fell it? What if the man who had lost the axe-head had said to the man of God, “I do not know where it fell. Down here, possibly. Maybe yonder.” I think the man of God would have said, “When you find where it fell, come and tell me.” And the man of God said, “Where fell it? And he showed him the place.” There is the lesson for you. You know the place where you lost power. No minister is required to tell you. No evangelist need tell you. You know the place. You lost it when you neglected the Bible. You lost it when you crowded prayer into a corner. You lost it when you did not confess your sin. You lost it when you neglected the Church. You lost it when you were in league with the world. You lost it at the card-table. You lost it at the dance. You know where you lost it.

A friend of mine was speaking at an afternoon

service in a certain city, when a man entered the building, clad in rags, and sat down in one of the pews. My friend went on with the service, when, suddenly the man sat up and said, "Sir, may I speak?" "Certainly," said my friend. The man said, "This is my father's church. He was an officer here. This is his pew. With six other boys I was in the Sunday-school here. Our Sunday-school teacher used to have us in her home on Saturday afternoons. She taught us the names of cards. Up to then we never knew them. Later, she taught us games of cards. Then after a while we said to her, "Not so much lesson and more cards." Then we forsook the Sunday-school, and while the others were at the school we were away playing cards. Sir (he said), of the seven boys, two died on the gallows; three of them are in prison for life; one of them is a fugitive from justice, and I am the other. Sir, if the officers of the law knew that I was here, I would be put in prison." Then, for a moment, standing perfectly still, he said, "All I have to say is that I would to God that my Sunday-school teacher had had a different influence." He walked out of the church, and my friend said, "We never saw him again. But there rose up a woman, dressed in black, who, as she started out into the aisle, staggered and fell; and as she fell, she said, "My God, sir, I am the teacher."

You know where you lost it. But please let me say, if you are out of fellowship with God I have no unkind word for you. I know my own weakness too well. If you are away from Christ I have no

sharp rebuke for you. I am a preacher of Jesus Christ. But I have this to say. Listen. If you have lost your power, God loves you. He loves you.

Commander Eva Booth tells of an instance in the middle western part of our country where a boy was arrested for the crime of murder. His old mother followed him to the cell, and sitting down by his side, said, "Jim, tell me now, did you do it?" And the boy looked up into his mother's face, his lips trembling and his own face growing white, as he said, "Mother, I did not do it."

When the time of the trial came on, the judge said to the mother, "If you will persuade your boy to plead 'Guilty' we will be easy with him." "But, your Honor," she said, "He did not do it." The neighbors came in to sympathize with her, and she would smile and say, "But he did not do it."

The prosecuting attorney said to her, "If you will tell Jim to change his plea, the judge will be easy with him," and the mother said, "Thank you, sir, but he didn't do it." The boy was convicted and the day of the execution came. The chaplain made his way into the cell, and the shadow of the gallows was already upon the boy. The chaplain said to him, "Jim, you are facing eternity. Tell me, did you do it?" The boy was perfectly still for a moment, then raising his face he said, "Chaplain, I did do it. You go and tell my mother."

One of my friends, who knew him, said that the chaplain went over to her home, and the old mother knew what day it was. The shadow of the gallows was touching her, too. When the chaplain entered

the room, she had her head down in her arms, and when he spoke to her she made no sign that she heard him. Then he said, "Mother, listen, Jim did it. He says he did it." And the mother did what my mother would have done, or yours. She gave one shudder, and dropped her head a little lower in her hands. Then raising up her face, down which the tears were streaming, she said, "Chaplain, go back as quickly as you can, and tell him that I love him." And that is God. Infinite in His mercy, matchless in His love. He loves you. I call you back to-day.

I have only one thing to say in conclusion. My message to-day is for the man who is not a Christian. He is deep down in sin, away in the blackness of despair. How are you going to get him up? Of course, in these days of worldly-wise men we have all sorts of suggestions. The political reformer comes along and tells us that we need better political conditions. Of course we do, but they can never take the place of salvation. The sociologist says that all the systems of men are wrong. He tells us to change our systems, and men will be better. Of course they will, but all the sociology in the world cannot save the sinner.

Then there are others who tell us that the axe-head is not off, but that we only think it is off. They tell us to just think it is on and to proceed to use the axe-handle and we will be all right. I am not against the political reformer; he has my sympathy and support. I am not against the sociologist; I believe in him. But I know only one way to get the sinner up. This is the way, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." There is no way



to lift the sinner up except by the drawing power of Jesus Christ. Preach Him, sing Him, live Him. That is the secret. Then there is hope.

One night there came into one of the Missions in New York, a man who, because of his sin, was bent down like a dwarf. Naturally, he would stand as tall as I, but in his sin he was bowed down until he was not more than four feet high. Sin had touched his tongue and he could not speak plainly. He dropped down on the only knee he could bend, buried his face in his hands for a moment and said, "O God! God!" and suddenly the bands that had held him were snapped and he stood up as erect as I am standing now.

I know the man. I have had him in my house as a guest. In the Mission at the end of the year they always allow the men to have an anniversary. When this man's anniversary came around he did not read the lesson; he let another read it. He let another announce the hymn. When it came to the time of testimony he bowed down as he had been dwarfed in sin, and then, with every eye looking at him, he rose up and stood erect, his face shining, his eyes filled with tears.

It is that sort of salvation I preach. Bound with a passion, you may be free. Held captive with a sin, you may be forgiven. Will you turn? I know where you made your mistake. You neglected your mother's pleading, you resisted your father's praying, you scorned your minister's preaching. That is the way you were lost.

Up in the Alps I saw here and there a black cross, and I said to my guide: "What does that mean?"

He said: "It means that when a traveller slips to death on such a point as this, they raise a black cross." I wonder if there is to be placed a black cross where you are because you will reject Christ. I used that illustration in my old church in Philadelphia, and an old Scotch woman came up to me and said, "Pastor when you told that story a man in front of me dropped his head in his hands and began to sob, saying, "I yield, I yield. I can hold out no more." "I wonder," she said, "if where he sat there could be placed a red cross." What is it to be to-day? Black or red? Yes or no? Life or death? Acceptance or rejection? God help you.

## VII

### IS IT WELL WITH THEE?

*"Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" And she answered, "It is well," 2nd Kings 4:26.*

FIFTY-THREE miles north of Jerusalem, eight miles from Tabor and a few miles from Jezreel, once stood the ancient village of Shunem. It was beautifully situated. It is said that "in that olden time every house had its little park about it and that every park had its fountain, the waters of which climbed the ladders of light." But it is not of the beautiful situation of Shunem that I am to speak. We know something about one of the families of the city. We know the number of the household—the father, the mother and the little boy, who was as truly a gift of God and a miracle as was Isaac. We know something about the home life of the little company. We say in these days, if we know what company a man keeps, we may study the man through his company. And if you will tell me the names of your chosen friends written upon your guest-book in your home, I can tell you very accurately the story of your home life. I can tell you very truly, no matter whether I have been in your home or not.

One of the very best things I know about the home in Shunem is this, that it was the place where Elisha used to tarry. Over and over again he passed through Shunem, and the Shunamite woman saw him. It is said in the story that she was a great woman. John McNeil has said that he thinks that means that she must have been a great discerner of character. She knew by the way the man walked that he was God's man. She said to her husband, "We will invite him into our home." The home was a small one, so they built for him the prophet's chamber. They gave him a special invitation to tarry with them, and when Elisha was weary he rested there, and when he was hungry he found refreshment in the home of Shunem.

We know something more about the household. One day in the midst of the harvesting season the little boy of the family turned his face away from his mother and sought his father and the reapers in the field. The hot sun of the East beat down upon him so that as he came into the presence of his father he threw his hands to his head, saying, "Oh, my head, my head." His father turned to a servant and said, "Carry him to his mother." And the lad carried him to his mother and placed him upon her knees and he lay upon her knees until about noon and then he died. You can only imagine the sorrow of that Shunamite woman unless you have passed through like affliction. She was an exceedingly wise mother. She did not shut herself up with the body of her dead boy and refuse to be comforted, nor sit alone with her grief and let her heart break. But she turned away from the home at Shunem and she said, "Elisha is across

the plains in the mountains of Carmel," and she hastened after him.

Elisha saw her coming. He turned to his old servant Gehazi and said, "Yonder comes the Shunamite woman, go and see what she wants." And Gehazi obedient to his master's command starts down the mountain side. When he comes near enough for the woman to hear his voice, he cries out to her after the manner of the East, "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?" And she in turn replies, "It is well." I suppose he thought that she would stop and tell him the nature of her errand to his master, but she pushes on past him and up into the presence of Elisha, where I suppose she sobbed out the account of the death of her boy.

By this time, Gehazi appears, and Elisha says to him, "Take this rod and go down and lay it upon the boy and see if he will live," and just as he starts to obey Elisha says, "Salute no one." I never realized what this expression meant until in the Holy Land I noticed the length of time required to complete the Eastern salutation, and I am quite sure that what Elisha meant to say was that there was no time for even the ordinary courtesies of life. The boy was dead, the mother was heartbroken, and the father was waiting in grief and despair, thinking that Gehazi might be the means of raising the child.

I have an idea that when Gehazí started down the mountain side at his master's command that Elisha thought the Shumanite woman would follow him, but she did not do so. I see her at the feet of the master.

I hear her saying unto him, "Oh, thou man of God, thou knowest that I did not desire a child of the Lord. He gave him to me. Now, He has taken him away from me. As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." And so Elisha takes her by the hand and starts down the mountain side. He comes into the home in Shunem, puts his hands to the boy's hands, his mouth to the boy's mouth, his eyes to the boy's eyes, and prays only as a servant of God could pray. Suddenly, there is a touch of color in the boy's cheeks. He sneezes seven times. His eyes are opened. Elisha takes him by the hand and bids Gehazi call his mother. And I think I see her rushing up and down the streets of Shunem, saying, "My boy was dead and is alive again." And there was joy in the old home in Shunem.

Why do you suppose this story was placed in the Old Testament? It is true that it is one of the miracles of Elisha. But why is it told? It would seem to me that among other reasons it is there for this purpose, that we might understand what it is to pray with importunity. "Do you believe," said a young woman to me in the city of Boston, "that if my mother and I should pray all night that my brother would be saved?" I said to her, "If I were you I would pray all night if I were led to do it." To my certain knowledge that brother had not been within four miles of the place of meeting. Before ten o'clock they were on their knees. At twelve o'clock they were praying, at three o'clock they were still crying out unto God, when the mother rose from her knees to say, "I believe God will hear us," and closed her eyes in sleep.



I saw that young man the next evening stand in the great church and say that he had spent a sleepless night. I heard him say that he occupied a most important position in the city of Boston. He said, "This morning, as the day was breaking, I gave myself to Jesus." I think the story of the Shunamite is in the Old Testament that we might thus learn how to pray.

One evening my telephone bell rang. When I went to answer the call I heard a voice that seemed to me to be almost choked with emotion say, "Will you pray for me?" and I said, "Certainly I will pray for you. But will you not meet me this evening at the close of the service?" I went to the service that night and at the close of the meeting there came up to me this man who had telephoned me. He said he occupied a responsible position as bookkeeper in the city. He said, "My father is a minister, my mother is a sincere Christian. I have been feeling the power of their praying. I have felt a great sense of need in my soul, and when I heard the song this evening, 'O, mother, when I think of thee, 'tis but a step to Calvary,' I bowed my head and took Christ." It seems to me that the story may be in the Old Testament that we may be led to the kind of praying that went up to God on behalf of that minister's son. I am sure the story is there to teach us how to pray.

"As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." We have had days of prayer. I wonder how many of us have had nights of prayer. We have prayed minutes for our children. How many of us have prayed by the day for our children? And

yet the story of prayer from the very first prayer that was offered until the last one that was sobbed out this evening, is this story, that when we pray in faith God does hear, and He will answer.

I think the text takes in every one in its teaching. "Is it well with thee?" That is personal salvation. "Is it well with thy husband?" That is interest in the salvation of others. "Is it well with the child?" That is interest in your own household. I ask the first question, "Is it well with thee?" I will answer it for every one in need. The man who is rich in worldly goods, highly honored in society, the man who has risen to some place of distinction, knows that in his heart there is an ache that money cannot stop and position cannot help. The man whose outward life may seem to be all right knows that in his heart there is again and again the cry for God.

"Is it well with thee?" I should like to answer the question for you if you will allow me. It is not well, and for two or three reasons. First, because sin is too mighty. No one of us is able to withstand the awful power of sin in his own strength. Sin is too mighty. There came into the city of New York a young Scotchman. He came from the hill country in Scotland. A friend of mine went to ask him to be a Christian. The young fellow only sneered at him. "Why," he said, "I have a character as rugged and as strong as the hill country from whence I came. I have never felt the need of Christ." In New York he began to go down. In the city of Chicago he made the wreck complete. Another friend of mine went to see him in the hospital, but the doctor refused to

allow him to enter. He said, "You could no more touch him than you could touch a leper." But when my friend said, "I have come to pray with him," the hospital door swung open. Lying upon a cot in one of the wards of the hospital was this young Scotchman. His eyes could scarcely close, his tongue and lips could hardly articulate, the joints of his body were beginning to separate. He was a leper indeed. "My God," said the visitor, "isn't it awful!" The doctor said, "Don't touch him, you must not touch him." The poor fellow turned his head on the pillow and said, "Mr. Smith, do you think that if I should cry unto God to-day He would save me? Drop on your knees, sir, and pray for me." When the prayer was ended he started again to raise himself up on his elbow, and said, "Tell the men of the United States that sin is too mighty for them to resist." Sin is too awful in its power to be trifled with. It is not well with thee.

I have another reason. Trouble is on every side of us. I am sure that no one of us can get along without Jesus Christ in the day when trouble comes. All the money in the world could not of necessity buy comfort when the heart is aching. A man worth twenty million dollars said to a friend of mine, "All the money I have ever earned and all the money that is to-day in the bank to my credit has never given me peace." One of the richest men in the United States was walking down Broadway with a business acquaintance whom I knew. This gentleman said to the man of wealth, "I suppose you are a very happy man with your fortune, which is so far up in the

millions?" And the many-time millionaire looked into the face of his boyhood friend and said, "Do you know, I have not, with all my money, the peace and comfort and satisfaction that I had when I was a boy working for a dollar a day."

Too much of trouble on every side. When the day comes that you yourself are ill, when the day comes that the family cord binding your household together is strained, you will need Jesus. You cannot get along without Him. Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston said that a man came in to see him one day, and said, "Dr. Gordon, will you come with me to the funeral of my little baby?" The great preacher thought he was going to lead in the service of a great funeral, but he came out to find only one carriage waiting at the door. In the carriage was a little white casket. The father and the minister rode all the way from Boston to the cemetery without a word. The little casket was taken out and carried out to the grave. The man put his hand into his vest pocket, took out a little key and unlocked the casket. He raised the lid, looked down on the little white face, closed the lid and put the key in his pocket. He then turned away from the grave, and rode all the way back to the city of Boston without a word and just as A. J. Gordon left the carriage he said the man reached out his hands, and taking hold of his hand with both of his said, "Doctor Gordon, wait a moment. She was all I had. She was all I had." Sobbing as if his heart would break he said, "She was all I had." "And," said Doctor Gordon, "he was without hope." There is too much of trouble. Therefore it is not well with thee.

I should like to give you two or three reasons why you should turn to God. First, God is ready. All the way through the Old Testament story, and all the way through the New Testament story you will find this stated. From the very first day when He went walking through the garden in the cool of the day saying, "Where art thou?" to the last sob of Jesus on the cross, God has been ready. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord." It is not a question with God as to how many times you have sinned, nor how far you have wandered, nor how black your life is, nor how helpless and hopeless you are. God is ready.

Second, Jesus is ready. I heard Mr. Moody say once in his preaching that when Jesus was upon Patmos He gave His message to John which we find in the Revelation, which is a mysterious Book to many people. Before the Book was closed He told John to put something in for everybody, and Mr. Moody said, "I can imagine him putting this in the Revelation: 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.' And I can then imagine Jesus saying to John, 'But they won't understand that exactly, make it plainer.' Then he wrote, 'Let him that heareth say, Come.' " But there will be some who won't hear, and so, said Mr. Moody, there was added, "and let him that is athirst come." But I imagine him saying that there will be some that are athirst and won't know it. And so the invitation is given that is as broad as from everlasting to everlasting, which reaches down to the lowest and up to the highest. There is no one whose case is

hopeless in his estimation, but that the invitation is for him. The young girl whose heart is heavy as sin can make it, who feels so helpless, it is for her. The man whose conscience is condemning him—the invitation is for him. Christ is ready.

Your mother is ready. Your friends are ready. I received a letter one morning blotted with tears. When I started to read it I knew that the writing must be by one who certainly knew very well how to write English. As I read on into the letter I saw that the hand evidently had been trembling. Down further the letters were not formed correctly and down at the last it was almost a scrawl; over the page it seemed to me there were drops of tears. This was the letter: "Please pray for my daughter only sixteen years of age; she has lost everything that makes a girl's life worth living. She has all but killed her father, and she is killing me." Such sorrowing friends are ready.

And then remember they are ready in heaven. Your mother, your father, your brother, your sister, they are all ready. "Will you shake hands with me?" said a gentleman in New York City. As I stepped to the platform he put his hand up to me and said, "Remember, sir, I have been a drunkard," and I took his hand in mine for a moment. Then he said, "I will tell you my story. One day I was literally lying in the gutter intoxicated, when a gentleman came along and said, 'If you would see your boy alive, hurry.' I hastened to the hospital where they had taken him. A great wagon had gone over him and he was dying. When I came into the room he caught me by my hand, and his fingers were only long enough to go round



three of my fingers; he pulled me down upon my knees and holding on to me with his fingers that were nearly stiff in death, he said, 'Father, I will never let go of you, I will never let go of you. You must meet me in heaven.' And do you know, sir, he died with his fingers around mine. The doctor came, bent back his fingers and released my hand. It was this hand," and holding it up above his head, he said, "it kept pulling and pulling and pulling, until at last I became a Christian." You know who it is in the skies. You know who it is that is holding you to-day. Your friends are ready.

Then there is a second question. Is it well with thy husband? I do not mean the husband that is to-day by your side, with whom you have been walking along life's journey so long (yet I do mean your husband, too). Is it well with any one whom you know is away from Christ? Answer it, not aloud but to yourself. Is it well with thy husband? The saddest thing in the world to me is that sacred things divide us. Trouble rarely divides us. The more our hearts ache, the closer we come together. Sickness does not often do it. Your fingers have become so thin that if you held your hand down your wedding ring would slip away. But your heart only beats the truer to the one whom you love. The saddest thing in the world to me is that sacred things divide us. The communion table is between us. The church is between us. Is it well with thy husband? This is the statement made in God's word: "He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"Is it getting night?" said an old Scotch woman ninety-seven years of age. "Husband," she said, "is it getting night?" And her aged Scotch husband by her side, realizing that she was dying, bent down close to her and said, "Yes, Janet, it is getting night." She was wandering a bit and was back in the olden days with her loved ones, but he knew that the end was near. She was still a moment, and then said, "Are the boys all in?" "Yes," he said, "the boys are all in, Janet." The last one had gone home three years before. She was again still a moment more when she said, "I will soon be in." "Yes, Janet, you will soon be in." "And you will soon come, too?" She asked. "Yes," he said, "by the grace of God, I will soon come, too." She reached out her thin hands in order that she might clasp them round his neck and draw him down by her side as she said, "And He will then shut us all in." "All in." I wonder if you can say it—with the boys all in; the girls all in. It is a sad thing to have a boy that is a wanderer, and a girl that is lost.

Is it well with the child? Your child, my child. I have such confidence in God that I know perfectly well that if a child dies in infancy before it is able to choose the Saviour for itself—I know perfectly well that God's matchless grace avails for the little one that passes by the short route into heaven. But can any of you tell me when our boys pass to the age of accountability? Can any of you tell me when a girl comes to the place where she knows the difference between right and wrong? I almost believe you might take people into church too old, but I do not believe

you can take them into church too young, if the child is cared for. Is it well with the child? The question is solemn. The only hope is in Christ. Choose Him now, and seek to win others to Him.

## VIII

### REGENERATION.

*"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.'" John 3:3.*

I THINK there is no chapter in all the Bible with which we feel we are more familiar than the third chapter of St. John. It may be because we find in it the marvelous expression of God's love in the sixteenth verse. Luther once said it was the Gospel in a nutshell. Another distinguished preacher has declared that if you should take away from him all of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament and leave him only this text, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," he would know enough of the heart of God, and he would know enough of the plan of salvation, to be saved.

Yet, to my mind, there is no chapter in all the Bible so difficult of explanation. It is in this chapter that we have the thought of regeneration presented, and if I should say to you, "Give me a definition of regeneration," I question if many of my readers could give a *definition* that would be satisfactory or plain to the man or woman who is seeking Jesus Christ. On

the other hand, if you should say, "Give me an illustration of regeneration," I could do it easily. I could tell you the story of the man who came into one of our services bound with sin and who, for months, has been free. This is the result of regeneration. I could tell you the story of the woman who, at the beginning of one of our missions, was hopeless and helpless, and who now is giving her testimony to the marvelous saving and keeping power of Jesus Christ. I would ask you to listen to her friends, who say that she is a changed woman, changed in her expression, in her manner of speech, so changed that she has become a new creature. That is regeneration. You will notice that this text has a marginal reading, which says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you except a man be born from above." So when you say you have resolved to give up sin, that is not enough. When you tell me that you have resolved never again to go in the way of iniquity, that is not enough, even if you could keep the resolution. If one is to become a new creature, and overcome the power of old sin, and new temptation, he must be born from above, and that means to have implanted in his nature a new force from above. It is to have within himself a new life which is the life of God. It is to have a Saviour offered to and accepted by him. That is regeneration.

Major Whittle once said in my church in Philadelphia, that when Jesus was here He filed a bill of exceptions. One count of that bill you find in Matthew 18:3—"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." There are those who say

there is a distinction to be made between conversion and regeneration; they say that conversion is your part of the work, and regeneration is God's part. Conversion is your putting yourself in the way. Regeneration is God's doing the work in you. Conversion is saying, "I will." Regeneration is God's breathing into you the breath of His own life.

The second count in the bill is recorded in Matthew 5:20—"Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." So there is very little hope for the one who puts away the Saviour, either to see God or to know Him. Indeed, there is no hope, and there is no open door. No man would dare to say that by his own efforts he could reach a standard of righteousness that would pass the judgment of an infinite God. Then how are you going to be saved? I know how you may be saved, and I tell it to the man, who, up to this moment is without hope, and to the woman who is in despair. I tell it to the rich and to the poor. I convey the message to the out-cast and the respectable. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." For by faith, we are united to Christ, and His righteousness becomes our righteousness. That is the sure way to be saved.

Another count in the bill, the third, we find in the Gospel of St. Luke—13:3, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." What is repentance? There are people who say that repentance is sorrow for sin. Then all men repent, for there is surely not a man bound with a passion, nor a woman held with a sin, who has not had sorrow for sin. They may have



said with hearts almost breaking, "O, that I might be saved!" but you must remember that that is not repentance. There are those who say that remorse is repentance. Then all the sinful people in the city have repented, because day after day walking the streets, and night after night tossing restlessly upon their beds, they have said, "My God, My sin! My sin!" But that is not repentance. Repentance is, in a sense, sorrow for sin; it is the crushing effect of remorse on account of sin; but in addition to this it is saying, "With God's help, I will turn away from sin." It is turning right-about-face, and looking unto Him.

Then the other count in the bill is the text above quoted, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

I hear somebody say, "I cannot come to Jesus." Why? "Because I have no feeling." But you never will have until you come. And another person says, "I cannot come to Jesus." Why? And he answers, among other reasons, "Because the doctrine of the atonement seems to me to be so impossible. I cannot understand how Jesus Christ, dying upon Calvary nineteen hundred years ago and more, can ever set me free." A man said once in my presence, that if he could explain the atonement, he would become a Christian. Then he will never come to Jesus, for not until we see God, can we begin to understand the atonement. Not an angel or saint in Heaven understands it. Eternity will not be long enough in which to comprehend it. If you are waiting for this, you are like a man in the university who might say, "I will

never study astronomy until I can understand it. I will never enter a class in mathematics until I can solve every problem." You must come by faith.

Here is another who says he cannot come. Why? And taking up the Bible he turns over its pages and says, "Too many contradictions." But I am sure that there has never been a book in the world that has such harmony in it as this old Book, from Genesis to Revelation; if you wait to argue your way through your difficulties I fear you will never come. A man once came to Mr. Moody saying, "If you will answer this list of questions, I will become a Christian." But Mr. Moody was too clever for him. He said, "If you will become a Christian, and start to-night, then come to me to-morrow morning, I will answer every question on your list." That night he accepted Christ as his Saviour. The next morning he came back to Mr. Moody's house, his face shining, and said, "Mr. Moody, I will not have to put you to the trouble of answering the questions. They have all been answered in the night and the way is clear." That is the way to come. If men, the latchet of whose shoes you are not worthy to unloose, if women, in whom you have as perfect confidence as you have in your mother, if men like Gladstone, if men like our President McKinley, if men like General Booth, and if women like Catherine Booth can say, "We took the step by faith, and all the way became increasingly bright ahead of us," then I think we may trust the Saviour. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is God's word and you must yield.

But I turn to the Scripture and find that the statement of Jesus makes it very plain. This is what Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." I can imagine some one saying, "I can quite understand how one deep in sin should be born again. I can appreciate the fact that a drunkard must be born again." But Nicodemus was a moral man, yet Jesus said to him, "Ye must be born again." Then if Nicodemus must, so must you. Jesus made it very plain. He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then he said, "Except a man be born of water \* \* \*" I think sometimes we make all too little of baptism, for as I turn over the pages of the Scriptures, I find that again and again baptism is plainly presented to us as a duty, and closely connected with believing; but Jesus, I am sure, was not talking about water baptism here. He said, "Except a man be born of water," and He was talking to a Jew. If you turn back to the Old Testament, you will see that the references to water are references to the Word. So this is what Jesus surely must have meant, "Except a man be born of the Word." What does that mean? It means that you may take God's promise of salvation and hold on to it by faith, and on the basis of His promise you may make your plea, and God will keep His word. That is the way to be saved. We have in our country a distinguished preacher who rose in a conference one day and said in my hearing, "I was raised in a Methodist family and every member of the household was a perfect battery of emotion. We never had a Methodist revival that they did not take me to

the altar, and urge me to remain there until light came, but somehow I could not be saved.

“But one morning when a student, I was seated on the campus at college preparing for my Bible lesson, I came to John 3:16—‘For God so loved the world.’ . . . . I stopped and said, ‘That is inclusive enough for me.’ ‘That He gave His only Son . . . .’ ‘That is provision enough for me.’ ‘That whosoever believeth in Him . . . .’ ‘That is definite enough for me.’ ‘Should not perish.’ I arose from my sitting position, and taking my little Testament in my hand, I held it up above my head and said, ‘O, God, here this morning I accept this statement of Thine as the truth, I will hold on to it while I live. I will carry it with me to the judgment, and if I am not saved, it will go hard with your book.’ And suddenly I found my eyes filled with tears, I found my lips trembling, I found my heart burning, and from that day to this I have been a perfect battery of emotion myself.” That is the way to be saved. Lay hold on God’s Word, and it will do its own work.

But Jesus makes it plainer. He says, “born of water (that is the Word); born of the spirit.” Surely this is the work of the Spirit; it is your minister’s preaching; it is the singing of a hymn which holds you; it is your mother’s pleading moving you. It is the tear-stained request that I once held in my hand signed by a broken-hearted mother which read, “Pray for my boy.” It is everything that can make you think. It is everything that can make you want to turn to God. It is the Spirit of God pleading. One evening at a service in New York City, I saw a very dis-

tinguished-looking man rise and I heard him say, "I will accept Christ." I went back to the hotel and told my wife that I believed I had been used to lead a great man to God. I thought I had, but the next day, which was the day of prayer, I saw this man come into the service carrying in his arms a little lame boy. He brought him forward and placing him on the platform, came over to me and placing his hand up to his mouth so that the child could not hear him, he said, "I want to introduce to you my little Joe. He is going to die." He did not need to tell me that. The little fellow's face was so white, and his hands were so thin, when I came over to meet his child he said with all the pride of a father, "This is my little Joe. He led me to Christ."

When he said it I confess I was a bit disappointed, for I thought I had won him. Then he told me this story. He said, "When the mission started, Joe said to me, 'Father, I cannot go to the meetings, but mother will take you. And all the time you are gone I will pray.' I never came into the house at night that I did not hear the thud of his little crutch on the floor as he came to welcome me, the moment the door was opened. He would spring into my arms and say, 'Did you come?' But last night he did not ask me. I heard him come to the door and as it was opened, he sprang into my arms and buried his face on my shoulder, and I heard him say with a sob, 'You have come, you have come; I know you have.' " and, "sir," said he, "my little boy won me." That is what I mean by the Spirit working. It is every holy influence. It is the prayer of your mother; it is the cry of the

preacher; it is the sob of your wife by your side; it is God calling when He says, "Turn ye, O turn ye, for why will ye die?"

May I say in conclusion that we come into the kingdom of God with different experiences. Some men sob their way to Christ. Other men shout their way into the kingdom. Some men come with all the calmness that is part of their nature. I like the story of the gentleman in Philadelphia who, after hearing his minister preach, turned to the man near him, and said, "Sir, when will the officers of this Church meet?" And the man said, "They will meet now, if you wish it." And the gentleman said, "Call them together." When the officers of the Church came together, this gentleman, who was one of the greatest manufacturers in America, rose before them to say, "Gentlemen, for a long time I have believed in Jesus Christ, but I have never acknowledged Him. To-day when the minister was preaching I thought the time had come, and before you this morning I acknowledge Him as my Saviour." One of the officers moved that he be received into the Church. Another seconded it. And that gentleman walked out of the room a Christian, and kept on walking with Christ to the day of his death, a model Christian.

You may come in from the East; you may come in from the West; you may come in from the South; you may approach from the North. But come. Waiting will not save you. Weeping will not save you. Working will not save you. Come. The danger is this: You are very near the kingdom—so very near. An uplifted hand, with the will to rise to your feet,



and your resolution not to yield would go in a flash. I once said to an American preacher in Oregon, "How did you come to Christ?" and he said, "I was raised in a Christian home; my mother was a saint; my father a Church officer, I was very near the kingdom, but I did not yield. One night I heard the minister use this illustration, and it won me: He said, 'A gentleman with consumption left home for the mountains, and, as is usual in our country with the people having this complaint who go to the mountains, his first days were days of real suffering. He became much discouraged, and said, 'I shall die if I stay here,' and started home.

"He sent a telegram to his home in the country, saying that he would arrive by such a train. But a storm came on. The telegraph wires were down, and the train was delayed. His home was three miles from the country station. He reached the station at midnight. No one knew of his coming, as the telegram was never delivered. The station was closed, and the lights were out. His house was the nearest to the railroad. There was only one thing for him to do. He must fight his way through the storm. Dying though he was, he pushed his way through the ever increasing snowdrift until at last he saw a light in the window of his home. He passed through the gate and staggered up the walk. Just as he reached the step of the door, he fell upon his knees from faintness, and with his hand upon the step of the door, he died." My friend told me that the minister turned to his congregation and said, "There is some young man in this building with his hand upon the step of the

door. Some day the door will shut." And my friend said, "I rose from my pew, and hurried home to my father, and dropping on my knees by his side, I said, 'I will yield, I will yield. I accept Christ now.' " I urge you not to tarry, and plead with you not to be too late.

"Almost is but to fail,  
Almost cannot avail,  
Sad, sad that bitter wail,  
Almost, but—lost!"

## IX

### REPENTANCE

*"Repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21.*

I DO not know a more direct statement than that. I do not know a statement that seems to me to be plainer for those of you who are away from Christ; therefore, I sound it out unto you again, "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." I have been perfectly amazed to see how little is said about repentance. How infrequently those of us who are supposed to be teachers and preachers mention it, how few sermons are printed about it. I suppose I have the library of the average minister, and yet when I run over almost every book of sermons I possess I find only five or six sermons on repentance. Two of these were preached by Moody, two by Charles G. Finney, two by our great Jonathan Edwards. Is it not a singular thing that we should say so little about repentance, because as I have been turning over the pages of the New Testament I find that repentance is essential to forgiveness, that repentance is essential to the possession of peace, and that repentance is essential to a final entrance into the city of God.

Turning to the pages of the New Testament I find over and over again the word repentance emphasized. Repentance and faith. Repentance, whereby we forsake sin. Faith, whereby we lay hold upon God's promises, and believe Jesus Christ to be the Saviour from sin. Without repentance there could be no faith, and without faith there could be no possession of real spiritual life. Therefore the emphasis is necessary. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul was a marvelous preacher—marvelous in more ways than one. He was a tireless preacher. He says that at all seasons he did not hesitate to declare unto them the whole counsel of God. He says also that he kept back nothing from them. So, evidently he was a plain and fearless preacher. I have an idea that that sort of preacher is really popular to-day. One of the strong business men in the city of New York, who was not a Christian, told me that he liked his minister; this minister has the reputation of saying very sharp, plain things from the pulpit, but, he added, "I will tell you why. I like him because he is not afraid to tell me where I am wrong."

Paul was evidently that sort of preacher. He was a personal preacher. He said, "I went from house to house beseeching you." I think he is a marvelous inspiration. I should like to have seen him when he stood upon Mars Hill and preached that matchless sermon of his. I should like to have been near him when he was dictating the epistle to the Romans, sending it out to the utmost bounds of the empire as logic set on fire. But I think I should like to have seen

him in some of the homes. I should like to have seen him in the midst of a family circle talking about Jesus.

Coming home from the burial of his wife and the mother of his children an old farmer in our western country wanting to impress his children with the need of being Christians sat by the old-fashioned fireplace, and reaching down with his hands picked up a little piece of wood. His children's hearts were breaking, so was his. Their eyes were brimming over with tears, so were his. Taking out an old-fashioned knife he began to whittle away at the piece of wood. He cut and cut until he had fashioned from the wood a little cross. Then holding it up between his fingers he said, "Children, I should like to tell you a story of One coming into the world in Bethlehem, cradled in a manger, living in Nazareth, preaching on the hills, suffering in Gethsemane, dying upon a cross like this." And then, when all the children were gazing at the cross, he said, "Children, this was your mother's Saviour. I should like Him to be your Saviour."

I should like to have seen the Apostle Paul in the midst of a family circle talking about Jesus. I should like to have been at his feet when he gave to some suffering soul in the household the consolation with which he was so perfectly familiar. I should like to have heard from his own lips the story of his journey to Damascus. His heart was changed from a stone to flesh and blood. His spirit was changed from bitterness until at last he was as tender as a woman.

He was a personal preacher. He was also an evangelistic preacher. He was in a great line. He was following John the Baptist, who said, "Repent ye."

He was walking in the footsteps of Jesus, who said, "Except ye repent." He was following close to St. Peter, who said, "Repent and be baptized. Turn unto Him and live." He was starting a great line of preachers. Whitfield thundered out repentance, the power of John Wesley's message was repentance, the thrill of Moody's story was repentance, and the thing that made Edwards great in our land was this, he was not afraid to tell men that they had sinned against God, neither was he afraid to call them to repentance.

Therefore, it would seem to me that I am speaking as I ought to speak when I say, "Repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." I believe you will agree with me when I say that there will be no repentance until, first of all, we understand something about sin. When I was a minister in New York City, in common with other ministers I was pleading for a revival. I agreed with every other evangelical minister in the city to preach on a certain Sunday with this in mind. I remember when that Sunday came I took as my plea, the Great Commission, and I called upon the members of my church to go out into fields white to the harvest, and I thought I had fulfilled my obligation.

My old college president was a member of my congregation. Therefore he was not afraid to come up to the minister, and lay his hand upon his shoulder and say, "I think you have made a mistake. I question," said he, "if New York City will ever be stirred. I question if men will ever be aroused from their indifference. I question if men will ever feel the need of a Saviour until we get back to the old days where



we preached the exceeding sinfulness of sin." Therefore I should like to say this evening that I do not think there will be repentance until we know what sin is.

Sin! Why its progress is like the trail of the serpent. Upon every book in the Old Testament, upon every page of the New Testament, upon every story in history, sin has left its mark. Upon every nation under the sun sin has left its mark, in every home that has ever been established it has left its mark. Sin is its own detective. It has left its mark everywhere. In the life of the woman who ought to have the very highest respect from those who are members of her household and her friends, it has left its mark. Sin! It could take your boy out of your arms and drag him down to despair, and break your heart. SIN! When you say it, you hear the hiss of the serpent in Eden. Do not think that men will ever repent until they begin to understand what sin is.

But there is another thing that we must also know. It is not only sin against society, it is not only sin against your mother, your father, it is not only sin against the church, but sin is against God. A man told me yesterday that he expected to reform. Very well, reform and you will touch yourself and your present, but you won't touch your past sin. You may resolve to be better from to-day, but your resolution does not touch yesterday. Reformation fails, resolution is powerless, sin is against God and demands repentance and atonement.

In the City of New York there was a mother who saved her little girl, ten years of age, when she was

in a burning building. The mother's hands were protected, and her body was protected, but her face was unprotected and it was badly burned. Not with all the skill of New York physicians could she be restored to anything like her former comeliness. She was horrible to see. She always went around her home and in the streets of our city with a veiled face. One day she went to one of the Sixth Avenue elevated stations and was waiting for a train when a company of school-girls came in. The opening of the door caused a gust of wind to pass through the station. It lifted her veil and threw it back. Before she could recover herself the school-girls saw her disfigured countenance. One girl was her own child, and when the girls stepped back in horror as they looked on that face, this girl failed to acknowledge her mother or speak to her. You shudder at that, but I think it is a small thing in comparison with the sin against God. He is infinite in His love, marvelous in His compassion, endless in His mercy. And you have sinned against God. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" is necessary.

But I have an idea that some of you are saying, "What is repentance?" In the Old Testament I am told that the word means to sigh or to groan, and in the New Testament, to turn around. Put the words together and you have the beginning of a definition. Repentance—it is being sorry for sin, but it is turning away from sin with God's help. I heard an Anglican Lord Bishop say on our journey to Australia that repentance was coming back to and walking with God, and going as far back as you wandered away. And it

occurred to me that the going back was a great deal easier than going away, because in the going back we have the arm of Jesus around us.

Repentance is sorrow for sin—at least, that is, part of it. Sorrow for sin because other people are hurt. I know of a man who lived in the state of New York. He was a brilliant lawyer, a university man who became addicted to strong drink. He all but killed his wife and children, and one day his little boy ran to my friend the minister, and said, “Come as quickly as you can. Father is intoxicated again.” And my friend rushed through the streets with the boy and reached the door of the hovel only to find a woman standing there with a white face. She said to my friend, “Sir, he is dead.” And the little fellow ran up and threw his arms round his mother’s waist and said, “Mother, aren’t you glad, aren’t you glad?” I told that story in Sydney, Australia, and the next day a young lawyer met me on the street and said, “That story of yours is not fanciful. My father is a judge in Sydney, and if at this moment I should hear that he was dead I would get on the tram car and go out to the edge of the city and I would take my old gray-haired mother in my arms and say, ‘Mother, he is dead. No more heart-aches, no more blows, no more anguish, as you wait for him.’”

Remorse on account of sin is also a part of repentance. Remorse because sin hurts yourself. Repentance is also contrition, because sin is against God.

But you must put all these together. Sorrow for sin, remorse on account of sin, contrition because of sin. Then what else? Do what the prodigal did.

Say this, "I will arise and go to my father." He arose and went. That is repentance.

Years ago I used to go to a Methodist camp meeting in the United States. It was a very old-fashioned camp meeting. They gloried in the fact that it was old-fashioned. I was there one particular summer and they told me that the preceding summer they had a very distinguished doctor of divinity there from the City of New York and he had preached to them on repentance in such a scholarly way that they were not at all sure that they ever had repented, and the longer he preached the more confused they were. At that meeting, also, was a famous old preacher who was known all over the State. He was not much of a speaker. His grammatical mistakes were many, but God used him. When the doctor of divinity finished his celebrated sermon on repentance this old man rose up and said, "Will you allow me to preach on repentance? I will take five minutes to do it." Upon his cane he began to walk down the aisle, and every step he took he said this, "I am going to hell." You can imagine the effect of that. A little bit startled, the people began to get up all around the building to see him go. He got about two-thirds of the way down the aisle, and the interest was at fever heat, when suddenly he turned squarely about and said, "I am going to heaven." Getting up on the platform he said, "That is repentance." Just right-about-face! Turn away from sin, away from the thing that hurts you.

I know this, that you may sorrow until your tears are almost blood, that you may have remorse until reason would give way, and yet never, never repent.

Repentance is being so sorry for sin that with God's help you will give it up. Will you do it? Hear me then, in God's name don't wait, for if you wait until to-morrow there must be a deeper repentance. Do not delay, because that is the reason why men must struggle so to be saved. They have delayed too long.

"Repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is a man who says he cannot believe. Very well, have you repented? A man told me the other day that he thought we preachers had an intangible way of presenting salvation. It is faith, faith, faith. He said that no man out in the world could appreciate that. Well, you can appreciate this: Have you repented? Answer it—have you repented? If you have, then listen.

Faith is the gift of God. Have you done your part? You say, "What is faith?" I will tell you what it is. It is taking the promises in this Book and accepting them. It is standing upon God's sure Word and saying, 'I cannot understand this, but I will stand here upon it, and wait the solution of the mystery.' That is faith. It is accepting the testimony of other men. One night there came up to the Water Street Mission an old man who had been there three times before the same night. The last call was at one o'clock in the morning. Mr. S. H. Hadley, my beloved friend, went down to open the door, and he saw before him this old man. He was over six feet tall, but he was bent not only with age but with sin until he looked almost like a dwarf. His hair was matted, his beard was unkempt, his coat was fastened together at the top with a nail, which proved that he had on nothing

under the coat. He had some old pieces of carpet wrapped around his feet. He leaned upon a mop stick to support himself. So wretched was he that he could scarcely open his eyes. That man had been the law partner of one of the men who was in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet. Sin brought him down. Mr. Hadley looked at him, and said, "Colonel, you cannot come in." And the old colonel, leaning upon his mop stick, his poor old feet so sore that he could scarcely walk, went on down under the Brooklyn bridge.

Mr. Hadley went up to his bed but he could not sleep. At three o'clock in the morning he went out after the man, and found him lying huddled together at the foot of one of the piers of the Brooklyn bridge. Mr. Hadley was a lame man himself, but he stooped down and took the colonel in his arms and fairly dragged him along the streets. He bathed him with his own hand and put him into his own bed to sleep. The next morning he clothed him and when the night came, with his arms round about him, he led him to the penitent form, and the old colonel dropped down on his knees and buried his face in his hands. He stained that famous altar with his tears, and he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Instantly he rose up and the chains were gone. He went back to his old law practice, and was restored to his old position. One night he came into my meeting with his gray hair brushed from his brow, with his eyes shining, and his face bearing all the marks of refinement of his own nature, and that of his mother back of him. What made the change? I will tell you. Jesus. Just accept



him, and then come to the foot of the cross and look up into the face of Jesus and say, "Jesus, Master, I will acknowledge Thee," and do it—do it now. And then start from that point and keep trusting and following Him.

We have a remarkable man out in Chicago, Mr. Dooley. You have read his books and his sayings in the newspaper. He said, "You have got to start believing to have an argument for your belief, and when you start the arguments will spring out of the ground." They will come from the heavens, they will face you whichever way you turn. Start now.

I would like to tell you what the result will be. Chains gone, doubts lifted, heart made clean, a song upon your lips, joy in your heart. Come, take Him to-night.

## X

### NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM.

*"Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."* Mark 12:34.

IT IS said that in one of the great cathedrals across the sea there is a clock, which is so marvelous in its mechanism that ignorant and superstitious people have almost looked upon it not as the work of man but of God. It is said that when the chimes ring out it would seem almost as if a company of angels had lodged in the cathedral spire to sing heaven's sweetest music. For a long time the maker of the clock was not paid for his services, so one day he stole up into the cathedral spire and touched one of the springs of the clock, and although all the mechanism was there the wheels did not move; although the chimes were there, they did not ring out. Then it is said that weeks and months afterward the maker was paid for his services, and he came again and touched the same spring, and suddenly the same sweet music rang out and there was the same wonderful exhibition of mechanism. It is an interesting story, and to my mind it is a good illustration of many in the world to-day who seem to lack but one thing to make them all that God would have them be, and that is the touch of the Master's hand. It would be a sad thing to see an arch without a keystone, a building

without a foundation, a human heart without a hope; and to find a man attempting to battle with and defeat all the temptations of life in his own strength. It would seem to me that the story we are studying is in line with the story of the cathedral clock. "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

I need scarcely remind you that these were the last days of Jesus on earth. The shadow of the cross was already falling upon Him. His enemies somehow seemed to realize that He was about to leave them, although doubtless they would never have put it in words, and they were attempting in every way to entrap Him in His doctrine. The Sadducees, who had no hope of the resurrection, put their questions to Him, while a man who was evidently fair in his judgment, and a lawyer of the old days, stood off and listened. And when he saw that Jesus answered them fairly, he turned to Him with his own questions. He said, "Master, which is the first commandment?"

I would like those of you who say that all we need is just to do the best we can in this life for ourselves and our fellow-men about us to listen to the reply of Jesus. He said, "This is the first commandment: 'The Lord our God is one Lord.' " Then He went on to say that man owed allegiance to Him. "And this," said he, "is the second commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' " Then He brought out clearly our duties and our obligations to our fellow-men. So if you are going to take Jesus as a model of fairness, and as a great teacher, before you begin to serve your fellow-men you must begin to know God. Before you begin to help those who are round about

you, and succeed in helping them, you must get your inspiration from Him. The first commandment is: "The Lord our God is one Lord," and you owe a duty to Him. And when Jesus saw that this man talked with Him fairly and honestly, He turned to him saying, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

But I call your attention to the fact that Jesus did not say he was in the kingdom of God. It is a possible thing to be near, and yet be out. It is a possible thing to be almost saved, and yet be far from the kingdom. It is a possible thing almost to hear the music of heaven, and yet never know Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. And so my message has to do with those of you who because of this influence, or because of that, have been coming slowly and yet surely to the border line. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

So many influences lead one to this position. But whatever the force may be—whether it is the influence of the home, or of preaching, whether it is the influence of the best friend you ever had in this world, I want to make it as plain as I can to you that there comes a time when, in addition to the mother's prayers, and the minister's pleading, you must act for yourself. You must *will* to enter the Kingdom. You must say, "I choose Jesus Christ to be my personal Saviour."

When Mr. Moody was preaching in a great series of meetings in New England, a young man heard him night after night. He felt that he ought to be a Christian, and he came to the place where again and again his hand was lifted for prayer; and again and again he passed into the inquiry service; but he said,

"To-morrow night, I will settle it," and leaving the building, he passed away from the service. Walking out to his home at the edge of the city, he passed underneath a row of trees on the way to his house. Suddenly he stopped. The moonlight was shining way through the trees, he took his walking stick and drew a line across the pathway. Then he stepped back and looked at it. "Now," said he, "if I step over that line it means that I will surrender. If I go around that line it means that my determination is against Jesus Christ." He stood looking at the line only for a moment, and then deliberately passed over it. And it is a bit of history that the man who that night found himself near to the kingdom of God, and by an act of his will simply stepped over the line, became one of the most earnest Christians, and one of the most faithful workers for Christ. So whatever the influence may be that has brought you nearer to Christ, you never will become a Christian until you act for yourself, and say "I will." "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." But to be near is still to be lost.

Allow me to suggest two or three things that may have brought us near to the kingdom. First, natural temperament. While it is true that morality which is the result of personal effort cannot save, at the same time I wish to pay a tribute to morality. It is not to be despised. But on the authority of God's Word I dare to say there is not found in all the New Testament one single verse of Scripture, which, if you take it in its connection, teaches any other thing than this: That man is not saved by his own righteousness; he is not saved by his own morality, or his own good graces.

But he is saved because he puts his trust in Jesus Christ, accepting Him as his Saviour, letting Him become the power and strength of his life, letting Him become the incentive to all goodness and greatness. Natural temperament may bring you very near. But if you are boasting of a morality attained away from Christ, let me ask you this question, whose is the standard of morality? Possibly you may fail before my standard. If I were attempting to be saved in my own strength, I might fail before yours. There is only one standard of righteousness, and that is God's, and no man can ever know God nor can he enter into the kingdom of God, until he reaches that standard.

It is an absolutely hopeless task in your own strength. A man might as well try to lift himself by his own boot-straps as in his own strength to attain to the standard of righteousness of an infinite God. But when by faith you accept Jesus Christ; when you turn away from sin and unto Him; when you say, "From this day on I shall walk with Him"; when your life is yielded to Him, so that He lives in you, and works through you—then God looks at you no longer in your individual capacity, but He looks at you in Christ.

"So near, so very near to God,  
Nearer I could not be,  
For in the person of His Son,  
I am as near as He."

Natural temperament will never save you, but faith in Christ will.

I have an idea that very many people are brought



near to the kingdom by home influence. If there were no other influence in this world that would have brought me near to Christ, it would have been the influence of my father. I saw him live an absolutely consistent life; I saw him meet reverses without complaint; I saw him bury my mother with an unfailing faith in Jesus Christ; I saw him, after having been a man of comparative wealth, come down to the plane where he faced poverty, and yet with his little children about him he never forgot to praise God for His goodness to Him. When he died he left me one inheritance. It was not money, it was not position. It was a New Testament, which was wrapped in a piece of paper and given to me as my part of the estate. And when I turned over the pages of this New Testament I saw verses which he had marked with his pen; I saw places on the margin where he had written his appreciation of God's promises. I saw page after page that seemed stained with his tears. Then I saw at the close of the Book his written consecration to Jesus. And if there had been no other influence in all my life, that would have brought me near to the kingdom. There are many men with fathers as true as mine, and as great and good as mine, and they have brought them near to the kingdom, but that will not save you. "I would go on my hands and knees through the streets of this city, if I could reach my boy," said a man to me. "I would cut off my right hand if I could reach him," he said. Then he sat down on the couch by my side, dropped his face in his hands, and sobbed as if his heart would break, as he said, "I would die for him if I could keep him."

There are many fathers who would die for their boys if they could save them, but the boy himself must choose. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." But you never will be saved until you say for yourself, "I will."

When we were in the city of Philadelphia a boy was arrested in the upper part of the city, and taken to the police station. His mother, who never knew that he was living other than a good life, came down to the prison to see him. She brought the cover from the bed in his room, thinking that he must be cold. She thought he might be hungry, and brought a little basket of delicacies, such as only a mother's fingers could prepare. When they opened the iron door of the prison to let her pass through, and when she got into his cell, she gave him the clothing to keep him warm, put the food down at his feet, and burst into tears. They took her home, and she cried all the night through, and when the morning came they found her dead upon her knees. The doctor said she had died of a broken heart.

There are many of us who have been brought nearer, and nearer, and still nearer, not by the preacher, not by the singer, but by the best memory that ever held a man's mind, the sweetest memory that ever stirred his emotions—the memory of his mother. In my mail the other day came these few lines: "I love old mothers. Mothers with white hair and kindly eyes, and lips grown softly sweet with murmuring blessings for their friends. There is something in their quiet manner that speaks of the calm of Sabbath afternoons. Old mothers, as they pass with slow-

timed step. Sweet mothers; as they pass one sees again old garden walks, old roses, and old leaves." And when I read those lines I was back again with my mother. I could feel the touch of her hand, and see the tears upon her cheeks. There is many a man who has had the same experience, and you are brought near by your mother. But all the mothers in the world could not save you. You may be near to the kingdom, but you must act for yourself.

I want to suggest another thing that I believe has brought some of you near, and that is preaching. The highest compliment that has been paid me as a preacher was paid by a man who said, "I have attended these mission services from the first. I have heard the singing, and I have heard every sermon you have preached, and not one single night have I been able to sit down. I have always stood in the crowd. But there was only one person present, and that was myself. You were preaching to me. When you preached to me I was back in England, I was sailing to South Africa, I was landing on the Australian shores, and I was breaking my mother's heart, and I was hurting myself. Sir," he said, "there has been only one man in all the crowd you have preached to, and I was the man." It has been practical preaching you may have heard and you have understood it. I have an idea that if you should stand at the judgment and God should say to you, "Did you understand me?" You might say, "No." Who could understand the infinite God, who holds the winds in His fist, and in the hollow of whose hands the seas wash? Who could understand the majesty of God? And if God should

say, "Did you understand my words?" I think you would say, "O God, I did not." And if you made such a confession I think He might say, "My ways are not your ways, and my thoughts are not like yours." But if when you stand at the judgment, God should say to you, "Did you understand that sin was an awful thing?" you would have to say "Yes." "Did you understand that Jesus Christ presented the only way to be saved from sin?" You would be obliged to say "Yes." You have understood the preaching. And the warning has come to you in time. Your heads are clear, and your eyes are wide open.

An officer of my church out in the middle western part of America was riding a young horse one day, and the horse threw him. In falling, one foot caught in the stirrup, and he could not release it, and the horse dragged him for at least a mile. Then the leather strap of the stirrup broke, and later a gentleman driving along the highway saw this old man lying on the road almost dead. They sent for his minister, and when I went in to see my friend, he was only half conscious. Bone after bone in his body had been broken. I remember two or three days later, when he had passed out of danger, I bent over him and said, "Tell me this. If you had not been a Christian, could you have decided for Christ in these days?" He said, "Never. The pain of my body was too intense, and the ache of my head was too severe."

But you are not ill, the warning has come to you in time. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

I have one other thing to suggest as bringing you

to this position, although I could speak of many. You stand in the place you occupy this evening because of prayer. Somebody has been praying for you. When you left England's shores, your old mother followed you down to the dock, put her arms around your neck, and said, "My boy, every day I will pray for you." And every letter that has come across the seas had that in it—prayer; and you have wondered why it was you could drift so far, and no further. It was prayer that held you. One of the most terrific storms that ever swept over on the Northern Sea was raging. The fisher folk had gathered upon the shore, and were down upon their knees in prayer, the minister in the center of them. They were lifting up to God the boys who had fastened themselves to the rigging of the vessel out in the storm. The vessel was plunging down into the trough of the waves, and then mounting on the crest of them. The master of the vessel put his speaking trumpet to his lips, and shouted, "Boys, if we go down again it is the end. Make ready." And they went down again, and once more they came up. Then the master put the speaking trumpet to his lips again, and shouted, "Lads, there is someone praying for us on the shore to-night. We will weather the storm," and they did.

There is someone praying for you. It is your minister. It is your old mother, who has brought you near to the kingdom. But I need not speak of all the other influences—you are near the kingdom. You are near the kingdom. God is speaking to you and you are near the kingdom. But you must enter in by your own choice.

When Mr. Moody was conducting a mission like this in a certain part of England, night after night a man came in to the audience. He was a Cornish miner. One night as Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey were leaving the platform, they noticed him sitting under the gallery with a friend. Mr. Moody made his way over to him, and said to him, "Why are you here every night and why are you waiting?" He replied, "Sir, I said to my companion, 'I will never leave this building until I am saved.' " Mr. Moody that night led him to Christ. The next day there was an explosion in one of the mines, and many men were taken out, bruised, and bleeding and dying. This man was among the wounded, and when they bent down he was fast passing away. When they took water to wash away the dirt from his face, he opened his eyes. His friend of the previous night was kneeling at his side, and the Cornish miner who was saved the night before was saying, "Jem, it is a good thing I settled it. It is a good thing I settled it last night." And he was gone. Oh, it would be a great thing for you to settle it now, while yet there is hope. The door of mercy is open. I bid you enter in.



## XI

### HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

*"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:3.*

THE plan of salvation is the wonder of wonders of all the ages. It is so marvelous that the men with the greatest minds the world has known have never yet been able to think their way through it. They have set sail with their intellectual craft, and have gone east and west, north, and south, but like the apostle of old they have turned back, saying, "It is past finding out." Concerning the plan of salvation wise men have always wondered. All the hosts of God's redeemed will sing of it throughout eternity. Yet, while it is so wonderful, it is so simple that the smallest child in your home understanding the difference between right and wrong may know enough about it to be a Christian.

The first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a great description of Jesus Christ. It is said by some Bible teachers to be the greatest in all the Word of God. He is preferred above the angels. His eternity is mentioned in the use of the most striking figures of speech and His greatness strikingly described, and when the author has reached the climax of his thought

he says, "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." There are two ways of reading this text. The second reading is: "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest they should run away from us as water from a leaking vessel." And if ever you have lived in the country, as I have, and have gone down to the spring for a drink of water, and the cup which you lifted to your lips has been leaky, you have found that the water has run away almost too rapidly for you to quench your thirst. Evidently the author has this in mind. Men lose the truth in that way. There was a time in your experience when you believed absolutely in the integrity of the Scriptures, when you believed sincerely in the deity of Jesus, but, somehow, under the influence of the world, and of men who have held contrary views, you have loosened your hold upon those beliefs. They have been slipping away from you.

The apostle says you ought to give "the more earnest heed." There is still another reading of this passage, which is as follows: "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should drift away from them." Drifting is an unconscious process. You have been on the stream on a summer day. The oars of your boat have been lying by your side. You have drifted so slowly that you never realized that you were moving until you turned your eyes back and saw the place where a little while before your boat was anchored. Men drift that way. They become

blinded by sin, and sometimes they stop and think of the other days when God was a reality, when Jesus Christ was a personal Saviour, when the Word of God seemed as if it had been written for their hearts alone. Then only they realize the extent of their drifting. So the apostle says, "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed."

After reading the description of Jesus, and after hearing the warning which the apostle sounds out concerning our drifting, we find the text facing us: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" It is a possible thing for one to be very near to Christ and not be saved. A great Atlantic steamer was making her way across the Atlantic Ocean when the passengers were startled by the cry, "Man overboard." There was a scene of great excitement; one man sprang to the rail and shouted out, "I will give £1,000 to the one who saves that man, for he is my brother." The lifeboat was lowered and the sailors made their way to the sinking man. Presently a cheer sounded out. The sinking man had been reached. When the lifeboat came near to the great steamer, they fastened ropes round the man who had been rescued, and gave the signal to lift. They drew him higher and higher, and just as they were about to lift him over the side of the vessel, the rope slipped and the man bounded away, struck the lifeboat, and sank into the ocean. I have seen men as near to Christ as that; swayed by a mighty emotion, stirred by a holy memory, quickened by the minister's preaching, lifted by the power of a mother's love, they have come near to God. But that is not enough; the apostle says, "How

shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" We may be very near and be lost.

It will not be difficult to remember what I have to present in this message. It all centers round three words—"Great," "Neglect," "Escape." It is a great salvation because it discloses to us a great Saviour. He is able to save to the uttermost. Literally it reads, "Able to save to the furthest throw." That means the man who is deepest in sin, the man who is farthest from God. The man who is most hopeless and helpless can lift his eyes toward Christ, and cry out saying, "God be merciful to me," and grace can reach him.

Once in a church in New England a distinguished woman told me that she had often been the guest of royalty, and gave the names of kings and queens at whose court she had been welcome. She told me the names of people in the City of New York to whose homes she had gone again and again as a guest, and I knew that those people represented the highest type of social life. But she told me that in all the round of pleasure she had had an aching heart. When I presented to her as simply as possible the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, she bowed her head, and I thought I detected traces of tears coursing down her cheeks. When I said, "Will you accept Him as your Saviour," she answered in a whisper, "Yes, I will." Some days after this I had the privilege of meeting her again and she gave this testimony. She said that all the years which she had devoted simply to pleasure, when put over against the few days that had passed since she had given herself to Jesus Christ,

were as nothing. She said, "Peace is mine, pardon is mine, forgiveness is mine." I think it is a great salvation that can reach to the lowest and at the same time bring help to the highest. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

It is a great salvation not only because it reveals to us a great Saviour, but because it suggests a salvation from greatest sin. One of the great preachers in the City of New York said one day as he stood in a pulpit and looked down upon the face of a man lying in his casket, at the foot of the pulpit, "Of all the men who have worked in our city I think this man was almost the greatest. I pay a tribute to his memory. He has influenced the city profoundly in his mission." When he had finished his tribute many came forward, and as they looked into the upturned face it was with real emotion. Then the poor of New York came to see their friend and they filed past for a considerable time, some of them bending over and baptizing his face with their tears. Finally there came a great number of men, each with a white rose, which they placed in the casket until it was covered, and then the roses fell from the casket to the floor. It was a monument of flowers reared to the memory of a man who had served three terms in prison. He had been called in the early days a most violent criminal. He had been a man profane and ignorant. It is said that he was seated one night in gloom and misery in an alleyway of a city when a missionary came along and handed him a little tract. The poor fellow tore it in pieces and said with an oath, "If you want to help me give me your coat. You

must see that I am freezing." Then the missionary, who was himself thinly clad, took off his own coat, and gave it to him. And this act of kindness almost broke his heart. Jerry McAulay, then one who was deepest in iniquity, and the farthest from God, was wonderfully saved. It took a great Saviour to save him. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

It is a great salvation in so many ways. Great in its pardon; great in its forgiveness. Can any of you tell me the difference between human pardon and divine pardon? I was once in one of the southern states when the governor of the state gave me the opportunity of going to the prison. He said, "There is a pardon for one of the men. I will send it by your hands." Since that day I have often imagined that man, on being set free, making his way to his home, and spending the first night with his household. I have thought of him sleeping at home that first night, the first for many months. I have imagined him waking suddenly in the night with a shout of fear and saying, "My sin! My sin!" His wife bends down to comfort him, and says, "But, husband, you are a pardoned man." And just to make it sure she brings the Governor's pardon, and shows it to him. But he cries out again, "My sin! My sin!" Do you not see the difficulty? He is a pardoned man, but he is not a justified man. When the Governor pardons, he only pardons; but when God pardons, He justifies.

I have many times tried to give a definition of justification. I could give a theological definition, but I am not giving a message to theologians. I have many



times tried to imagine what justification really is. I have looked into the face of the baby of my household unmarked with sin and have wished that I might be as pure and as free from sin as he. And when I have thought of my many failures I have been all but disheartened. But in the sight of God my sin is put away, and in God's thought I am freed from its penalty and power, and it is marvelous to be thus justified in God's sight, freely and forever.

It is great also in its forgiveness. And the difference between human forgiveness and divine forgiveness is this: You injure me very much and I forgive you, but every time I see you I remember the injury, but God does not. I remember when I was a lad that one day I hurt my mother's feelings very much. She came again and again seeking me, but all through the day I eluded her. Then just as the day was dying out of the sky, at the time when every boy feels the need of his mother, I felt the need of mine, I stole back to the house; and I can still feel her arms about me as she drew me up against her, and said, "My boy, your mother will forgive you." Then putting her face down close to mine, she said a thing which I am sure she did not realize meant so much; she said, "But it will be hard to forget, will it not?" That is human forgiveness, but it is very far from being God's method of forgiveness. Some of you know that the sin of past years has been condemning you. In the quiet of the night conscience has been speaking again and again, and you have said, as a man said to me in the city of Philadelphia, "If God forgives what about my sin?"

It is plainly stated in the Bible that when He forgives He forgets. A minister in a great city was one day preaching a sermon on redemption and forgiveness, when it occurred to him that he might tell his own story. He had been a wanderer. He had almost broken his mother's heart. "But," he said, "Jesus found me." He was preaching to a great crowd of people, and stretching out his arms over that great throng of men and women, he said, "Men, a Saviour who can save one such as I, can save you." When the service was over the church officers gathered about him, and said, "You never preached before as you did to-night." When they had passed on, down the aisle there came an old woman. Her hair was grey, but it was like a halo of glory. Her brow was furrowed, but it was as if an angel's fingers had touched it. When she reached the great minister she put up her trembling hands, and clasped them behind his neck, and said, "O Jimmie, what made you tell it? Why did you tell it? You never were bad in all this world." And yet years before he had almost broken her heart with his sin, and she with a mother's love had forgotten. That is a suggestion as to God's way of treating us. He will remember your sin against you no more forever. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

But I hear some of you say, "I know I should be better." Well, what will you do? You say, "I will reform." What does that mean? You say, "From this time on I will not commit that sin again which has so harmed me. I will turn away from that transgression which has weakened me. From this time on

I will be true." That does not meet the case. Let us suppose that I owed you a thousand dollars and I go into your office to-morrow morning and say, "Sir, I was in the church last night and decided to be better. I have made up my mind never again while I live to go in debt." Maybe you would take me by the hand, and say, "That is fine, I congratulate you." But you would not open your private drawer and take out my note for a thousand dollars and hand it to me, saying, "That settles your account; that pays the note." No, you would say, "See here, sir, your reformation is for the future, your indebtedness is for the past." And just so you cannot ignore the sin of yesterday.

I went to preach in a prison at one time several years ago; the prison chapel was so small that the governor said we had better go out in the open. So we went into the open court, and the prisoners gathered round me in great numbers. I said to the men, "I can give you the secret of getting almost as much money as you wish." And you should have seen the audience. They drew a little closer to me and gave the closest attention; many of them were in prison for trying in various ways to get money that was not their own. Then I said, "Just take a piece of paper, and write down on it how much money you want, and tell me how long you want it for. Sign your name to the paper, and I will take it over to the bank and slip it through the grated window and the cashier will slip it back again. For that is not the secret." But that is the way some of you have thought you could be saved. You have been saying that you were better than many a church member; that there were people

professing to follow Jesus Christ who did things you would scorn to do. But you have not in this position learned the secret. There is not in all this Book in which your mother believed when she died, the pages of which your father stained with his tears as he studied it—there is not a sentence, which, taken in its connection, teaches other than this—That man is saved not by what he is in himself, but he is saved because of his faith in Jesus Christ. So, when these men in the prison seemed a bit disappointed, I said, “Take another piece of paper. Fill out the amount of money you want, and put down your name. Then I will take the paper to Mr. Andrew Carnegie, and have him sign his name on the back of it; I will then take it to the bank and slip it through the grated window, and the cashier will look at it just for a moment, not so much to see your name, but that of your security, and because he is satisfied with that he will pay the money.” And any one could walk into any bank in our country with his head rather high if Mr. Andrew Carnegie endorsed his note. And I know this, that any one who stands to-day with all the memory of his mother, with all the advantages of his early training, would have no show at the gate of heaven, were it not for Jesus. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”

It is great in its sacrifice. Jesus died that we might live. He paid the debt we owe. I put the last two words together—“Neglect,” “escape.” Some seem to have the idea that they are not in danger unless they commit great sin; that they are all right until they are guilty of some great transgression. Just fold your

arms and stop sinning to-day, and reformation cannot touch yesterday and resolution cannot avail for last year. One day a man started out in a boat on the Niagara River a good distance above the falls. He was weary and sought to rest on his oars, but he did not know the current. He sat there with arms folded, and men on the shore who knew the current shouted to him, "The falls are ahead of you." But he did not move. People ran down the bank waving their hands at him and shouting, "The falls are ahead of you." But he gave no heed. He just sat with folded arms, and the mighty current of Niagara swept him over. Neglect cost him his life.

I recall the great fire that occurred some years ago in Minneapolis when one of the great newspaper buildings was wrapped in flames. The man in charge (I think) of the Associated Press dispatches, sat in the ninth story, and sent out a message all over America, "The building is burning. The fire is in the sixth story and I am in the ninth." Then a little later he sent out a second message: "The fire is in the seventh story, and I am in the ninth." Then he sent a third message: "The fire is in the eighth story and I am in the ninth." And when he could hear the crackling of the flames near to him he started to escape. Other men in the building had escaped. They had made their way quickly down the ladders and fire escapes while there was time. When this man came to the fire escapes they were too hot to hold. When he went to the stairway, the fire blocked him. He made his way to the window; he stood for a moment on the window casing, then leaned out to lay hold of

a guy rope, and missed his footing. The rest of the story I need not tell you. With the abundant provision for his safety that man was lost. Why? Neglect! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

I know only one way to be saved. First, repent of that sin that has cursed you. Repent of that sin that has mocked you. Repent of that sin that has undermined your character. Second, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Third, confess Him as your Saviour. Fourth, obey Him in your living. Do it now. It is not as if you had to wait till the way grows easier. Come now.

May I close with this? In the city of Philadelphia we had a family of repute. The family was made up of a father who died of a broken heart because of the shame that came to him through his boy; a mother who was beautiful; a very dutiful son, who is to-day a practising physician in that city; and a second boy, who was a disgrace to his family. When the father died this boy started away from home. He went as far as Baltimore, and then on to Washington. One day there came to him a great hunger to see his mother. As he started back he felt ashamed to go into his old home. He was afraid to go up boldly to the door for fear the servants might see him. But he knew that if he could slip into that house, there was one who would meet him and receive him. You know the one he had in mind. It is the one who always makes us stop and think, and makes us better as we think. This boy had no sooner touched the door than it opened and with never a word of complaint



his mother's arms went round about him, as she put her face against his to give the kiss of welcome; then she took him up to his room, directed him to his bed; in the early hours of the morning his brother rapped on the door of his room saying, "Edward, hurry, mother is dying." The boy arose and rushed into his mother's room, and they left him alone with his mother. Dropping down on his knees, he put his arms around her, and said, "Mother, mother, you must forgive me." As she looked into his face with such a smile as only a mother's face can wear, she said, "Edward, my boy, I forgave you long years ago, and I have been waiting all the time for you to accept my forgiveness." And ever since Jesus Christ died upon Calvary God has been waiting—waiting—waiting, for you to take His forgiveness. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

## XII

### SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT

*"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8.*

WE ARE nearing the close of the earthly ministry of Jesus when we study this sixteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. We are hearing His last words of advice to His chosen disciples gathered around about Him. Last words are always interesting. While this is true of every one it would also be true of Jesus. The last words of your mother; the last words of counsel of your father; the last word that you heard your boy say when he slipped away into eternity. Everything Jesus said was matchless. He spoke as never man spoke before Him. He spoke with authority and not like the scribes. He charmed little children from their play; He turned men from their daily activities and He made women forsake all and follow Him just because they heard Him speak.

But somehow when we come to this time of His earthly career, when the shadows are lengthening, His words seem to be specially precious: "I go to prepare a place for you." How many times we have read it in the presence of our friends who were suf-

fering: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." How many times we have comforted ourselves with that assurance. When the day has been dreary, when the night has been dark and the sky overcast, when we seemed to be hopeless and helpless, we have again turned our hearts upwards as we have said, "O Lord, how long? How long?" His words are matchless. But these words of the text are wonderful. "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

It is scarcely necessary I should say to you that He is here referring to the Holy Spirit of God. If you are familiar with the setting of this text of Scripture, and if you will read at your convenience the verses preceding and the Scripture immediately following, you will find there are three special things Jesus suggests the Holy Spirit will do.

First, He will compensate for the absence of Himself. It would be a marvelous thing to have Jesus here in person; if we could look up into His face, if we could gaze upon the hands that were pierced with the nails and see the side that was thrust through with the spear! But if the words of Jesus are true—and we have proved them to be true—then we may have the same joy if we realize the presence of the Holy Spirit of God. For He will make Jesus real to us.

In the second place, this Spirit of God will continue the training of Jesus' disciples. He will lead them into all truth and His work is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. So there is really no excuse for ignorance on the part of those of us who are Christians. Moody used to say that there were depths in

God's Word that he could not sound, and yet in the same Book we read that the Spirit of God will lead us in our search after truth into the very deep things of God so that we may know about His Word, know about His Son, about Himself and about His will.

In the third place Jesus suggested to His disciples that the Holy Ghost would interpret Himself to them. Just as Jesus interpreted the Father to His disciples. You will remember that He said one day, "He that hath seen me, hath seen my Father." So that if you would have the best revelation of God you need not expect to find it in nature, although that is great; you need not expect to behold it in force, although that is wonderful; if you would have the best revelation of God, you must find it in Jesus. Therefore, the next statement is true.

If you would know Jesus you must throw wide open the door of your heart and let the Spirit of God come in. You must yield absolutely to Him and when He has entered in He will interpret Jesus to you. He will make his way plain before you. He will tell you what it means to bear His cross; He will tell you what it means to live in His spirit. So that at once we have answered the argument that is being made in these days, that evangelism is a bit out of place because it is fitting men for the next world and not fitting them for this. That evangelists are a bit behind the times because they fail in their preaching to sound what is known as the social note. If the Spirit of God has possession of our lives, if He is interpreting Jesus to us, then here and now we would seek to live as He would live, so that the Spirit of God is here doing

exactly what the men of these days contend He should be doing.

There are reasons why we should understand the work of the Holy Spirit of God. We are living in what is known as the dispensation of the Spirit, we are living in a time when the Holy Spirit is specially operating, when He has a special field of service, bounded on the one side by Pentecost and on the other side by the return of Jesus, whenever that may be. I do not know when it is to be, nor do you know. God's word does not state it. But with Pentecost on the one side and the coming of Jesus on the other side—like two great mountain peaks—between the two the Holy Spirit of God is working. I do not mean to say there is no reference in the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit at work. He spoke by the lips of Abraham. He was present in the testimony of Isaiah. Over and over again you read of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. You remember in the days of the flood when Noah opened the window of the ark a little dove flew forth. Whenever, in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, you find a dove mentioned there is at least a suggestion regarding the Holy Spirit of God. This little dove flew forth over the waste of waters and found no place to rest its feet and came back to Noah's outreaching hand. He opened the window of the ark a second time, and the little dove flew here and there and found an olive leaf and came back to rest upon Noah's hand. But when he opened the window of the ark a third time the dove flew here and there and found a resting place for its feet, and came no more forever.

The Old Testament is full of types and prophecies which are fulfilled in the New Testament, and this picture of Noah's dove is a splendid illustration of the work of the Spirit. Back in the Old Testament He moves this one, He stirs that one, but He does not seem to abide. When Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary He made His way back to the Father, saying, "Peace has been made in the death of the Son." But when the fullness of time had come, when the disciples had waited after continuous prayer together, suddenly with the rushing sound as of a mighty wind the Holy Ghost came upon them working marvelous transformations. Peter, the man who denied his Master, preaches the wonderful sermon of Pentecost; Peter, the fisherman of old, speaks to the people and three thousand souls enter the Kingdom.

The Holy Ghost is here to-day finding His abiding place in the hearts and lives of believers. When Jesus spoke to His disciples in the fifteenth chapter of John, twenty-sixth verse, He said, "When He is come, He will testify of me." In another place it is said, "I will bear witness of Him." There is also an illustration of this in the Old Testament. In the Book of Ezekiel, chapter forty-seven, first verse, where the sanctuary is being described, it says that there ran out a river by way of the door and past the altar, and the river ran eastward. That would mean nothing to you as a Gentile, but it would mean everything to the Jews. The east meant everything to the Jew. He pitched his tent facing the east. Why? Because he was looking for the coming of the Messiah. It is a great illustration that this river, flowing forth from



the sanctuary and starting east, is like the Holy Spirit of God, who always witnesses to Jesus. And when this river flowed east it is said that everything it touched came into life. This also is an illustration of the Holy Spirit of God. He is the secret of power.

Now I have no word to say against intellectual ability. It would be quite possible for one to be a giant intellectually and at the same time be absolutely loyal to everything Jesus commanded him to do. I have nothing to say in criticism of the man who occupies a high social position. His passion for Jesus may be in no way hindered by his surroundings. But I have this to say—beyond the power of intellect, beyond the power that comes with social distinction, beyond man's genius, is the power of the Holy Spirit of God. When He possesses us then our lives are made wonderful. It is that which makes the difference in testimonies. One man speaks and you fall asleep, another man speaks and it is like the call to battle. That is the difference in singing. Some people sing artistically, correctly; everything they sing seems to be perfect. They have all the qualities of the master who taught them; they can interpret the most classical music the world has ever known, and when you hear them you are charmed with their skill, but you are not moved. Another rises to sing and instantly your heart is strangely stirred, you find your tears flowing, and when the singer comes to the end of the song, you have no words to express your pleasure. Now, I hold that the difference is this. One sings, possibly, with the spirit of man, the other sings in the power of the Holy Ghost. It makes all the difference in the world.

If we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, and if His dispensation is bounded on the one side by Pentecost, then I turn to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and read the thirty-third verse which is St. Peter's explanation made to those who marveled at his power; to those who hurled at him the accusation that the people were drunken with wine; this is his explanation: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Jesus had ascended to His place in glory. He was there exalted. I can imagine that all heaven was filled with praise at His return and because He was exalted and honored, Pentecost had come.

We hear a great deal in these days about Pentecost repeated. You cannot repeat Pentecost. It is unnecessary that we should repeat it, but we may have a Pentecostal experience just in proportion as we take Jesus into our lives and truly exalt Him. It is for this reason that we ought in these days in our singing, our testimony, our preaching, our praying, to keep Him on the throne of our lives, for when we keep Him exalted in thought, in speech, in life, God has promised that the Holy Ghost shall be poured forth upon us.

Now for the text: "When He is come He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Therefore, with this text of Scripture I am pleading for the man who is not a Christian, for the man who has fallen into sin, for the woman whose

life is unclean; I am here making an appeal to the man who is sceptical, to the one who is dishonest. When He is come He has a three-fold work to do. He will reprove or convict of sin. He is not here to convince you that you are a drunkard, you know that; He is not here to convince you of the fact that you are dishonest. He knows that and you know it. What is He here for? He is here to convict you of sin. You are a drunkard because you have not put Jesus in His right place. You are dishonest because you have put Him out of His possession. You are impure because you have not believed in Jesus. And you are where you are, in doubt and despair, because you have not trusted Him. The greatest sin in the world is not drunkenness, the greatest sin in the world is unbelief. Jesus said it. And when you stand at the judgment bar of God He will not ask you whether you were a drunkard, whether you were impure, or whether you were dishonest, He will ask you this: "What did you do with Jesus?" And as you answer that question you will stand or fall. "When He is come He will reprove the world of righteousness, of sin, and of judgment." "Of righteousness because," He said, "I go to my Father and ye see me no more." There is stated in God's Word over and over again, this word, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Have you sinned? Again, "The wages of sin is death." Tell me if you have sinned. In the midst of your despair, in the face of your weakness, I stand before you with my Saviour and in this Book it is written, "He was delivered because of our offenses." Jesus can save you. I turn back to Isaiah and I read, "The Lord

hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." I turn back again to the New Testament and I read, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." He is answering before God for you as He presents Himself a sacrifice. He was delivered because of our offenses, He was raised because of our justification.

There is an Old Testament illustration and a New Testament illustration that I would like to give you. In one of the Old Testament prophecies there is a verse which runs like this: "She hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her iniquities." That does not seem fair. Double, that is the statement. She hath received at the Lord's hand—double. I think I know what it means. In the olden days if you and I had lived and I had become indebted to you, I would have written a note for you upon an indented piece of paper which would have been torn in two; I as the debtor keeping one piece and you as the creditor keeping the other; and when the debt was paid you would give me back the other piece and I would take that and nail it to the door of my home, double, to show that all my debt had been paid. Then listen to this Scripture: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that were against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. That is the Old Testament text. This is the New Testament illustration: Saint Paul is writing his letter to Philemon. He is writing it on behalf of Onesimus, the slave who had wronged his master and fled to the great city where Paul was. Paul listens to his story and then sends him back to his master with a plea. This is the plea: He does not say, "Receive Onesimus because I am an apostle," or

"because I am an aged man." He says, "Receive him in my stead, and if he hath wronged thee or oweth thee anything, put that to mine account." Hallelujah, what a Saviour! There is a hymn—I wonder if you know it:

"Before the throne my Surety stands  
My name is written in His hands."

He is there for me and for you. If that is true, then my relation to God is complete in Christ.

When the Civil War was on in the United States it is said Abraham Lincoln issued an order that for a certain time no man was to go home on furlough. During the time the order was in force a man made his way to the city of Washington to see the President. They would not allow him to see the President. He said his wife was dying and he wanted to go home and see her. Still they refused to allow his admission. He turned away from the White House with his head bowed and anxiety expressed in every feature. As he walked down the grounds President Lincoln's son came up to him and taking his hand, said, "What is the matter?" He did not brush him aside. Joseph Parker says that there is a time in the life of every man when the touch of a child's hand makes him strong. And so he turned to the boy and said, "My wife is dying and I wanted a furlough but they won't allow me to see the President." "Very well," said the little fellow, "you take my hand, I am President Lincoln's boy, and I will take you in." He led him up the steps to the President's room, but they would not allow him to open the door. They said, "The President is busy." But the little fellow was not to be put

off, and still held on to the man's hand. Just then the door opened and he cried out, "Father, tell this man to let me come in." Abraham Lincoln dropped his pen and said to the officer, "Let him in." The boy came in with his new-found friend, and the soldier told his story. Abraham Lincoln dipped his pen in the ink, signed the order of furlough and sent the man home. The illustration is perfect. We are in sorrow because of sin, and Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of man, lays hold upon us. But He is the Son of God as well, and when I stand in the presence of God, then God will say, "All your sins are cast into the depths of the sea; all your sins are as far from God as the east is from the west; all your sins are behind my back, and all on account of Jesus. Hallelujah, What a Saviour! What a Saviour! "Of righteousness because I go to my Father and ye see Me no more."

"Of judgment." There is another place in the New Testament where we have a text like this. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come. But in my text it is not judgment to come. It is "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Who is the prince of this world? Jesus tells you. His adversary, the devil. The one who has assailed you to-day. Jesus said "The prince of this world is judged." Why is he judged? That he may at last be overpowered. When Jesus stood upon the mountain and the devil offered Him all the kingdoms of the earth if He would bow down before him, He said as He wielded the sword of the Spirit, "It is written," and again "It is written," and the devil left



Him. But His conflict with him reached its climax when Jesus, hanging upon Calvary, bowed His head and said, "It is finished."

There are two things I want you to know, this is the first: The devil only has such power over you as you will give him. You say, "I am a drunkard." Oh yes, but you yielded. You say "I have broken my marriage vow." Oh yes, but there came a struggle, and it was in the struggle between purity and impurity that you fell. Let me say it again—The devil has only as much power over you as you will give him.

The second is this. You may escape if you do two things. First, Pray. An old man who had been sixteen years a drunkard staggered into one of our meetings one night and sat down on a front seat. He had not listened to a word that I had spoken, I am sure, but he seemed charmed with the singing. When I gave my invitation to come into the lower room he came and with one of the members of my own household kneeling beside him, that poor old drunkard whose wife had died and whose children were disgraced, rose from his knees and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." He told me he was tempted only once after that to drink. He was walking over the Hudson River bridge in Albany. It seemed as if all the devils in hell were clutching at his throat urging him to drink. He ran across the bridge, got into his little room, dropped down upon his knees, and said "O Jesus, I gave myself to you, don't let me fall." "And," said he, "I never again was tempted to drink."

The second way is this. The Bible is the sword of the Spirit. A friend once said to me that he knew a

little boy who had promised that he would carry a Testament with him everywhere. One day after he had accepted Christ he was walking along the street when a temptation came to him. He took out of his pocket his little Testament, held it up as if he faced his adversary and said, "Do you see that, it is the sword of the Spirit." He did not quote a verse, he simply held it up.

The way of life is plainly marked out. Our great adversary has a mortal wound. We may easily overcome him if we fight in the right way. Not in our own strength may we triumph, but in His who is the chiefest among ten thousand. "To-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your heart." To-morrow may never come, and if it comes the door of mercy may be closed.

### XIII

#### CAST OFF BECAUSE . . . .

*"My God will cast them off, because . . ." Hosea 9:17*

**M**R. MOODY used to say that the gospel was a savor of life unto life or of death unto death, and always one or the other. He used to declare that the same sun that strikes upon the clay and hardens it, would strike upon the ice and melt it, and that the hardening and softening processes were always going on in audiences where the Gospel was preached. It seems to me that it is almost dangerous for men to have an invitation given them to come to God, that is, to have it given repeatedly, if it is rejected. You have imagined, some of you, that you can say "Yes" and "No" to God as you please, that it was for you to decide whether or no you would be a Christian. For ten years, for twenty years, with some of you for fifty years, there has been a rejection of God's offer of mercy. You have wandered away, you have lost your faith in the Bible, and sometimes you marvel that you have lost your conception of Jesus. You have thought, "Why is it that I am criticising the church and the minister?"

I can tell you the reason. You are in these days reaping the harvest of other days of rejection. No

man may reject God continually without having his heart harden, without making it more difficult for him to turn to Jesus. If you refused Him yesterday, it is more difficult to accept Him this evening. If you have been saying "No" for fifty years your conversion would indeed be a miracle, not only of God's grace, but of His power. I am becoming alarmed because people refuse Him.

I have a text of Scripture which has been given me as a warning for all such. I shall use only a portion of it. All through the Old Testament I have found God's reasons for turning away from His people again and again. The Old Testament is an illustration for us in modern times. The things that point to Israel are an illustration for you and me. My text is found in the prophecy of Hosea, chapter nine, verse seventeen: "My God will cast them off because——" I shall stop there in the verse. If I had only one text of Scripture, I should complete this verse, but because I have four texts very much like the one used, I shall stop in the midst of the first one and enlarge upon the others. "My God will cast them off because——." There is always a reason and the responsibility never rests with God. If any man is ever finally lost, it will be in spite of God's mercy, and in the face of His constant pleadings. "My God will cast them off because——." God willeth not the death of any sinner but that all may turn unto Him and live." That is God's position. There is another text of Scripture which I think ought to be read in this connection. It is exceedingly striking: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." If you are ever finally

lost the responsibility must be upon you and upon no one else. "My God will cast them off because——."

I have, specially in these last days, been turning over the pages of the Old Testament. I find that the Old Testament is a marvelous picture of God. Take away the New Testament and you will be amazed at the story of God in the Old Testament. I find the story of His yearning when He walks through the garden in the cool of the day, saying, "Where art thou?" I find an illustration of his compassion when David hears Absalom is dead. He staggers down the stair between the gates saying, "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee," for as a father David is a picture of God. I turn again to the Old Testament and I find the best possible illustration of His love, in His yearning for Israel. You must take story and add to story in the Old Testament if you would know Him.

Then turn to the pages of the New Testament and behold Him manifest in the flesh. Watch Jesus as he heals the sick, opens the eyes of the blind, blesses the little children, comforts the sorrowing mothers, gives peace to the distracted fathers, and then hear Him saying, "He that hath seen Me hath seen my Father also." And you never know the pity of God until you see it in Jesus. You never understand the compassion of God until you find it in His Son. You never know the immeasurableness of His love until you see Jesus by day and by night with the tears in His eyes, the blood upon His brow, the scourges upon His back and agony in His heart, seeking, seeking and seeking again. Put the Old Testament and the New

Testament together and I do not understand how any of you can resist this pleading.

I like to find this text of mine in the Prophecy of Hosea for three reasons. First, because Hosea himself was almost a brokenhearted man. You know the story of his wife; she had betrayed him again and again, and still he loved her. He pardoned her only to be betrayed again. He took her back unto him only to have her disgrace him still again. And in his treatment of his wife Hosea gives us a great illustration of God's treatment of Israel. Quivering with pain, his eyes full of tears, with his heart almost breaking, he gives us this prophecy and as he comes to the close of one of the heights of his arguments he gives us this text. Hear this expression, "Oh Israel return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away." The other day in reading the comments upon this prophecy, I found that he gave this title to the whole prophecy: "Man's sin against love." And it is a sad thing that you may sin against love. Some have sinned against their mothers' love. A man concerning whom I have a note, received recently, has sinned against his wife's love. Many have sinned against God's love. It is a sad thing that you can do it, but you have done it and you are doing it, and for you the text is spoken: "My God will cast them off because——." I want you to let these words sink deep into your heart. You must remember that God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, that you are still dealing with the God revealed in the Old Testament in His treatment



of Israel, only the picture to-night is more intense, the danger is greater, the sin is greater, because added to the God of Israel we have Jesus of Nazareth, we have the Son of God, we have the Saviour of men.

It was an awful thing in the light of all God's dealings for Israel to reject Him. Where is there a man with power of mind great enough, with speech thrilling enough, to tell men what the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ really is? Turning over the pages of the Old Testament I find two or three texts which give me an illustration of man's drifting from God. In them I read your story. The first text is in Hosea 4:6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee." They refused to know. Taken up with other things they turned a deaf ear unto God's pleadings.

I believe that the first step away from God is *pre-occupation*. There are too many of us to-day who are occupied with trifling things instead of eternal questions. You are considering the gaining of a fortune. That is not wrong in itself, but you had better not consider the gaining of wealth until you can be sure about your eternity. You have been taken up with the pursuit of pleasure, possibly not wrong in itself, but it would be well for us to turn away from everything else until we have settled this question. Jesus thought it was important enough to say, If your right hand is in the way, if your right eye is in the way, cut off the one and pluck out the other. It is better to be maimed and halt and blind than to be lost. You are occupied with other things. Some men and women have been occupied with sin. It

blinds your vision, it finally quiets your conscience. It weakens your character. It takes away from you the taste for God's word. It puts a word of criticism for the church and the minister upon your lips. You are occupied with other things, when the greatest question in this world is this one: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" You have forgotten that. God has stated in His Word that He can free us from sin. He tells us that He can transform our lives. He tells us that all along the journey of time He can make us strong to resist evil, beautiful to reflect the righteousness of God in Jesus. We have dismissed His statement with a sneer. He tells us that when we are through with time He will give us an unending eternity, and we have counted the gaining of a fortune as of greater importance. We are too much occupied with other things.

One day I heard Fred. B. Smith preach to men in a western city. He said that one morning when they lived in the country his father and his household were aroused with the tidings that one of their neighbors was dying. This old farmer was one of the richest men in the state where they lived. They called in the physician and the physician said to the man, "You are facing death. You had better send for the minister." The minister came and then they sent for the neighbors. Mr. Smith said that they gathered round this aged man's death-bed. They tried to pray and could not. They started to sing and broke down. They spent a day and a night with him and started upon the second day when just as the day was being born the

old man started to rise from his pillow and then fell back upon it. His great, strong son put his arms under his shoulder and raised him a little bit so that he could get his breath. Then the old farmer said this, "Boy, it is getting dark. It is getting dark." And when they tried to make him think that it was all the time getting lighter he sank back upon his pillow with this awful message: "It is all a failure," he said, "It is all a failure." He was one of the greatest farmers in the state. He had a bank account that was very large. He had friends by the score, but he had turned to other things and away from Christ, and some of you are doing that.

I think there is a second step in drifting away from God, and for that I have a text. It is indifference. When you started, you were not indifferent, when the minister pleaded with you your heart did respond, when the revival of other days swept through your city, you did give attention, you listened and all but heeded. Now it is different. I have a text for you, too. Isaiah 65: 12. "Ye shall all bow down to the slaughter, because when I called ye did not answer, when I spake ye did not hear."

If the first step is pre-occupation, then I think the second step away from God is *indifference*. To me that is positively impossible of conception. Doctor Torrey used to have an illustration that was repeated to me, of an old father and mother who determined to give their boy an education. They were as poor as they could be. They had a conference in their home and decided to send their boy to the university. They knew he must be away three years in his prepara-

tory work and four years in his college work. Seven years in all. In the summer vacation he must work near the school but could not come home. Every dollar sent to him increased the pinch of poverty at home. Finally the old father said, "Wife, I cannot stand it, I am going to see him." He did not have money enough to go by train so he drove across the hills. It took him days and days, and the horse he drove was ridiculous. The wagon in which he drove provoked a smile from all who saw him come into the university yard. He never knew that his boy had drifted, he had not been told that he had forgotten his father's God. Three young fellows came swinging down the sidewalk in the university town. When they saw the old man they laughed at him. He saw them in the distance, too, and his old heart began to beat rapidly, he recognized one of them as his boy. He threw down his lines, sprang out of his wagon and ran to meet his boy. They told me in the south that that boy looked at him for only a moment, then in the presence of his friends who had jeered at this old man, told him he did not know him. He said, "You are not my father." The old man turned without a word; he did not touch his boy, he did not kiss him. He got into his wagon, rode away back over the hills, went into the old farm house, sat down in the old chair; his head dropped forward on his breast and he was dead.

I wondered when I heard the story why the boy did not have a vision of the old days when his father said he would educate him; I wondered why the recollection of his father's prayers did not stir him. But

I can explain that better than that you should be indifferent to Christ. Everything you have in life that is worth having God gave you. God gave you vision, God gave you hearing, God gave you hands with which you have wrought out your fortunes; He gave you feet with which you have been walking the journey of life; He gave you your home, your mother, your baby. And for years He has been pleading, and pleading, and pleading, and you have grown indifferent to Him. When you have your Bible some day just go to the close of that passage to which I have referred you—Isaiah 65:12; the closing portion runs thus: "Behold my servants shall eat, and ye shall be hungry: behold my servants shall drink and ye shall be thirsty: behold my servants shall rejoice, and ye shall be ashamed." I pity you when the crisis comes. Some day you will reach the crisis. Death will stand knocking at the door and you will not be prepared to meet it. Or you will go home from your office and find your baby is sinking, and all the money you have will not stop your aching heart or your flowing tears. You are indifferent. In God's name how could you be? He is infinite in His love; He is matchless in his tenderness. How can you be indifferent?

I find the third step also in the Scripture which I think you ought to hear. Proverbs 1:24-29. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirl-

wind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then they shall call upon Me but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." The first step, pre-occupation; and money it seems is worth more than your soul; you have taken the second step—indifference—and as the minister pleads your heart is like a stone, your mother prays and your eyes never moisten with tears; and the third step is wilful rejection of Jesus Christ.

It is an awful thing to become accustomed to the power of God, but I think if there is anything else that is more awful it is this—to become indifferent to the pleadings of God. Do not imagine for a moment that it is only a man's voice that is speaking to you in the preaching. Oh, if God would only speak to you as never before. A wilful rejection! You are like a man in the city of New York who ran away from a police officer and sprang into the river. He pushed his way from the dock. The policeman threw a rope to him. It was too short. They threw another. It fell across his arm. He raised himself from the water just a little bit and twined the rope around and then with an oath cast it from him and sank out of sight. You have done the same thing with God. He called you when you were a boy. He called you when you were a young man just starting business. He called you when the marriage bells were pealing forth, when your first baby came and went into its grave. He called you when the telegraph ticked and ticked and the message came to your door and you opened it and read it, and you said, "My God, mother's dead." He called you when the great calamity swept



## XIV

### ACCEPT HIM NOW

*"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Luke 18:37.*

THE highways that lead to Jerusalem are always crowded with begging people. I had almost to fight my way into the city because of the lame, the halt, and the blind, on every side. It was especially true in the days of Jesus. He was making his way toward the city of Jericho, and great multitudes thronged the road. By the wayside was a blind beggar, Bartimæus by name. He felt the coming of the crowd before men with eyes could see, and when he realized that the multitudes had drawn nearer to him, he began to cry out excitedly, saying, "Tell me who it is that is passing by." But nobody stopped to answer the question of the blind man. Then, I imagine, he sprang out into the road, and, with arms outreached, and with sightless eyes filled with tears, I think I hear him say again, "Who is it that is passing by?" Then someone, seeking to quiet him, spoke the words of my text—"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." Then the blind man began to cry for help, stretching forth his hands to Jesus. Our Saviour turned to look into the sightless eyes, by a

word gave him sight, and he went on his way rejoicing.

It is not possible to say more than this by way of introduction, but I should like to add that Jesus of Nazareth is still passing by. He is the central figure of history, He is the foundation stone for all true civilization, He is the inspiration for right living, He is the strength of all true character building, and He is our only hope for time and eternity. He is still passing by. A man insults his intelligence if he does not consider Him. We know what sort of a man He was by what He said. "Never man spake like this man." We know it by what He did. He had only to reach out His hands, and the lame were healed; He had only to speak, and the blind could see; He had only to look, and the sick were made to rejoice, and they went along as if they were well. Tissot pictures Him passing through the country, and all ahead of Him are people suffering, and all back of Him are people leaping and praising God. We know Him by what He said, by what He did, by what He was.

In one of our cities I was speaking concerning the claims of Jesus Christ, when I saw an old, gray-haired man, evidently especially interested. I beckoned him to come near to me at the close of the service, and then I made the statement again, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, because He said He was, and proved His claim by what He did. The old man looked at me for a moment and said, "Yes, but he might have been deceived." I said, "Do you mean to say that Jesus Christ was a fanatic, and not to be accepted as a teacher?" He said, "I should not like

to go so far as that." I held out my Bible to him, and said, "Take this Bible and read all the words of Jesus, and if you can find one single sentence in all the sayings of Jesus that represents Him in any other way than as the most marvelous of teachers, as any other than the Son of God, then I will agree in the presence of this audience to turn away from my position and take yours."

The old man said he would not take my Bible because he had one of his own, but he said he would give the matter fair consideration. Three days later I saw him again in the meeting, and I heard him say this: "For the first time in all my life I have read carefully the New Testament. With prejudice put away, I have considered the words of Jesus; honestly and sincerely I have weighed His messages, and I have come to receive Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and, furthermore," said he, "I think no man can weigh His words carefully without coming to the same conclusion." Jesus of Nazareth still passeth by.

As a matter of fact, where is He at this moment? I was preaching in my old church in Philadelphia, when, in speaking rapidly I made the mistake which many others have made in speaking of Jesus. I said that He was standing at the right hand of God, but He is not standing. Priests of earth stand, because theirs is an unfinished work, but He is sitting, because His redemptive work is finished, so far as He is concerned. Then all you have to do to be saved is to accept God's offer of mercy and enter upon that finished work, to come with your sins and doubts, to come with

emotion or without emotion, to come with your feeling, or to come with no feeling, but come. He is seated at God's right hand. Some one says, "Is not that a contradiction? You say that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, and now you say He is seated at the right hand of God." Here is the explanation, John, 14:16: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Listen to the next verse: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." So that He is seated at the right hand of the Father and He is here. He is here in the third Person of the Holy Trinity. He is here in the singing, here in the speaking, here in the praying, here in the very atmosphere.

Mr. Moody was holding a service at one time when a great business man came and tried to get into the building, which was crowded. They were singing that hymn, "O Word of Words the Sweetest," and had just reached the chorus, "Come, Oh, Come to Me;" that was all this business man heard. He made his way back to his office, but he could not attend his business. Across the pages of the books he saw that word, "Come," written. He made his way back to his home, and he heard it in the ticking of his clock. He shut himself up in his room, and he heard it in the beating of his heart, and he told Mr. Moody that alone in his room, down on his knees, repenting of his sin, he received Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and that it was

the words of the hymn that did it, and the hymn was simply Jesus speaking to him.

It was one of the greatest business men in the State of New York who came that day to Christ, and came because the hymn won him. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. When we were holding a mission on the Pacific coast, we were making our way up to Oregon, and we stopped at one place called Grant's Pass, and had a great meeting there at the railroad station. Just as we were singing the "Glory Song" there climbed up on to the platform a man dressed like an engine-driver, and one of my friends said, "That is the engine-driver who is going to take your train out to-night;" and then he added, "He is not a Christian." Turning to him while some one was leading the singing, I said: "So you are not a Christian?" and he said, "Tell me what it means to be a Christian." Then I told him it was to repent of every known sin, that it was to believe on Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour, that it was to confess Him as Lord, and to obey Him as one who could direct his life; and he bowed his head and said, "I will take Him." "Very well," I said, "tell the people here that you will take Him." But it was not easy for him to speak to two thousand people, so he said, "You tell them." The man stood by my side as I told them, and they cheered him again and again.

That evening, after our great train had been thundering away to the north for several hours and had stopped for water, that engine-driver came to our sleeping car, and, coming up to me, said, "I have carried two Presidents of the United States over this

road. I have carried President McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt; but this is the first time I have ever carried Jesus Christ with me. But from this time on, every day and night, He will journey with me." Now, why did this man come to Christ? I do not at all believe that it was because I had spoken to him, nor because his friend had spoken to him; but I learned afterwards: That when he left his home that afternoon to take his train out, his good Christian wife had thrown her arms around his neck and said, "George, it would be an awful thing, after we have journeyed together all these years, for us to be separated for eternity, and your life is so perilous." Then she drew his head down a little closer, and said, "George, it is an awful thing not to know Jesus."

But I do not think that was altogether the reason. I think it was not the pleading of his wife and the kiss she put upon his face, but it was the text, and Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

At another time I was holding a meeting when a great, burly New Englander came up to me, and said, "Did you not conduct a mission in Oregon?" When I said "yes" he said, "Do you remember George Sampson, the engine-driver?" "Yes," I said, "very well." "He is my brother," he said, "and do you know, sir, I have prayed for him for twenty-five years, and when he accepted Christ, his wife made her way to the nearest telegraph office, and sent me this message away across the continent, 'George is converted, and I will wait here to receive your greetings,' and I replied over the wires, 'Praise God! I have been



praying for this for a quarter of a century.' ” It is when the sermon grips you, and sin haunts you, and when your mother's prayer follows you, and your father's message will not let you go, that my text is true. “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.”

Go back a moment to the blind man. He was groping there in the darkness, and there are three things about him that you must understand. The first is this—he needed Christ; he could not see, nor can you.

Perhaps you have all your life been troubled with doubt; you almost doubt the existence of God, you question the inspiration of the Scriptures, you doubt the deity of Jesus. You cannot see, and it is no wonder. The things of God are not intellectually discerned first, they are spiritually discerned; and it is not what a man can weigh with his mind or understand with his intellect—it is not that which saves him. It is the acceptance of Jesus.

Secondly, he could only feel, but he knew that he wanted the Saviour. That is the experience of every one who is away from Christ, though he may not acknowledge it. The pleasures of the world have not satisfied him, sin has only mocked him, trouble has all but crushed him, and he has an ache in his heart. Every one away from Christ to-day, if he would confess it, would be obliged to say, “This is, indeed, true, I wish I knew Jesus.”

Thirdly, the only thing that he could do was to step out into the darkness. He could not see, he could only feel, and when he stepped out into the darkness, Jesus gave him sight. Our American poet, Whittier,

put it as beautifully as any man could when he said:

"The steps of faith fall on the seeming void,  
And find the Rock beneath."

And that is the story of everyone who has become a Christian. You may not be able to understand, but step out by faith. You may not be able to explain the mysteries of the Scriptures, but step out by faith, and at this moment you may be saved.

D. L. Moody began his great conferences at Northfield with just a little handful of men, and one of the men who came to one of the first conferences was an Anglican clergyman, who told Mr. Moody how there came into his home in England an old German professor, an agnostic; and this German professor went with the Anglican clergyman one Sunday to the services of his Church. When the day was over the clergyman said to him, "Well, professor, what do you think of it?" The old man hesitated a second and said, "It is all very beautiful." Then the old clergyman said, "Professor, don't you think it is likely there is a God?" "Yes, likely," was the hesitating reply. "Well, if there is a God, don't you think He would make a revelation of Himself to His creatures?" "Yes, I should think He ought to." "Well," said the clergyman, "if He has made this revelation to His creatures, don't you think He would make it plain if they would ask Him?" and the old German professor saw where he was going to, logically, and he had to reply, "Yes, I should think He ought to." "Have you ever asked Him?" "No, I never have." "Well, get down on your knees, and I will ask Him

for you." And they got down on their knees in the rectory, and the clergyman said, "O God, show Thyself to my old friend now;" then he put his arm around his friend, and said, "You pray." The professor hesitated a minute, and then began in a trembling voice: "O God," he said, and then, as if he had gone too far, he changed his prayer. "O God, if there be a God, show me the light, and I will——." He was going to say, "And I will walk in it," when springing to his feet, with the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "Why, I see it now, and it is glorious!" And whenever God has a man's will, whenever He has his absolute surrender, whenever He has his acceptance of Christ by faith, the man can step out into what seems to be darkness, and he will find all to be light.

But, what if you were to let Jesus of Nazareth pass by? Some of you will not understand what I am going to say now, but it is true if the Bible is true. If you allow Jesus of Nazareth to pass by, and you do not take him as your Saviour, then you have lost the power of prayer. There is only one way to pray, and it is in the name of Jesus, our Lord. When our Civil War was on in the United States, a young fellow, passing over the battlefield, saw a friend of his lying there who was shot almost to pieces. He stooped down and straightened out the shattered limbs, took water from his canteen to wash away the blood from his face, and then said, "Is there anything more I can do for you?" "Yes, there is something you can do for me," replied the dying lad. "If you have a piece of paper in your pocket, and will write a letter to my father, I think I can sign it. My father

is a great judge in the North, and if you take him this letter, he will help you." And this was the letter: "Dear Father: I am dying on the battlefield, and one of my friends is helping me, and if he ever comes to you, be kind to him, for Charlie's sake." And then, with fingers that were fast stiffening in death, he signed his name.

The Civil War came to its end, and the soldiers went back home. One of them, in tattered uniform, made his way to the home of this great judge, but the servants would not admit him, for he looked like a tramp. He waited until the judge came out, and then stepped in front of him, holding out this soiled piece of paper. But the judge, thinking it was a plea for assistance, pushed him to one side. Then the soldier stepped back again, and showed him his boy's signature, and that made all the difference in the world. He threw his arms around the soldier, and took him back into his house, and said to him, with tears running down his cheeks, "You can have everything that my money can buy, everything that my influence will secure." The name did it! And there is a Name that unlocks heaven; it is this:

"Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest carol ever sung:  
Jesus, Blessed Jesus."

If you are letting Him pass by, God pity you. There are only three things that you can do with Jesus. First, you can be indifferent to Him. Indifferent to Jesus, the Saviour of your mother, the Friend of your father! Secondly, you can reject Him.

Thirdly, you can accept Him. Sooner reject your own mother than Jesus. A friend of mine was sitting in his office, in Chicago, when he heard a rap at the door, and there came in a young fellow, who called him by name and said, "Do you think there is any hope for me to be a Christian?" My friend said, "Certainly." "But," he said, "wait a moment. Can a man be a Christian and turn against his mother?" And he went on to tell him this story:

He said, "I left my home in the eastern states, and my mother followed me with her letters and prayers; this angered me. Whenever I got a letter, I just threw it unopened into the fire. Then she came after me, into the city where I lived, and found her way to the railroad, where I was working, and one day she followed me onto the track where my engine was waiting, and looked up into my face." Then he paused a moment, and said, "What do you think I did?" My friend said, "I know what you did; you sprang down from your engine, and you took her in your arms, and kissed her dear face, and called her mother!" "No," said he, "I did not. I opened the throttle, drew my engine off, and left her standing there. "Then," he said, "she came to the engine-house, but I would not see her. Then she made her way back to her home in the East, heartbroken. Can a man be a Christian and do that?"

Six months later this same man sat in my friend's office, and he said, "My mother is in the hotel across the street. I am taking her back with me to the West. She cannot live very long now, but I am doing all I can for her. Do you think a man can be a Christian

if he has done all he can to atone for the past?" Accept Him now, with all your doubts and all your sins. He is passing by. Take Him and He will blot out your sins.

We were in Minneapolis when a business man was urged to come to the mission, and the more he was urged the more angry he became. One night, they say, he stopped for a moment at the door of the hall, and this was the only sentence he heard in all the sermon, "Accept Him now." He went away to his home, and they never heard him say an unkind word about the mission after that. He never confessed to being a Christian, but all his friends knew he was changed. That was in October, and when Christmas morning came, he called his wife and children into his study, and said, "I want to make you the best Christmas present I have ever given you," and putting his arm around his wife, he said, "I want to give you a Christian husband." Then, with one arm around his wife, and the other encircling the children, he started to pray, and broke down sobbing. But from that day to this he has lived a consistent Christian life. Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. He is here at this moment. He is waiting and pleading. I beseech you to take Him.



## XV

### GOD'S X-RAYS

*"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. 12:14.*

**T**HIS is a remarkable text; it is found in a great book. It comes almost at the close of the book, and the book is a perfect illustration of the fact that the man who has found the world at its best, and tried the best that was in it, realizes that all the world is vanity. Sin is mocking him, pleasure is deceiving him, and so we find him saying in the fourteenth verse of the first chapter, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered." Then, in the seventeenth verse: "And I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit." In the second chapter, verses one to eleven, we find the same remarkable expressions, concluding in verse eleven with the words: "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do, and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."

Then, if you turn to the eleventh chapter and the ninth verse, you read: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

If ever there was a man who had tried to find the best in the world, it was the man who wrote this book. And I wish all young men who have found sin alluring for a season, and all women who have found questionable pleasure fascinating for a time, would listen to this man who reaches the conclusion of the whole matter when he says, "Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." In the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of the twelfth chapter, he says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Then comes our text, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." A startling sentence, is it not? The judgment! I do not know of any subject that so makes one think. When you have forgotten other things, this word, judgment, will sound over and over again in your mind. The judgment! You will hear it in the tick of your watch under your pillow; in the throb of your pulse; you will hear it in the beat of your heart. "I could forget everything else in the sermon, and everything in the song," said a gentleman to me, "but when I passed out of the service you had conducted, I heard above the sound of the conversation of people, one

word, and it was 'judgment.' When I made my way to my home, I heard it in the striking of the clock; then I heard it in the beating of my heart. After a sleepless night I came to my place of business, and I seemed to see it stamped across the books; then I thought I saw it in the newspapers, this awful word, 'judgment.' I found no peace," said he, "until I turned my eyes to Jesus Christ, and from that moment until this I have been at rest." Some of you who read this message will never forget the word.

I know there are judgments here. There has been the judgment of conscience. Paul Lawrence Dunbar wrote of this when he said:

"'Good-bye,' I said to my conscience,  
    'Good-bye for aye and aye.'  
And I pushed her hands off harshly,  
    And I turned my face away,  
And conscience, smitten sorely,  
    Returned not from that day.  
But the time came when my spirit  
    Grew weary of its pace,  
And I said, 'Come back,' to my conscience,  
    'For I long to see thy face.'  
But conscience cried, 'I cannot,  
    Remorse sits in my place.'"

Then we have faced, not only conscience, but remorse as well. Not a great while ago, in a great city, an inspector of police stepped up to a young police officer serving in a most important capacity, and said, "You are requested to appear at once and report to your superior officer." The officer knew why he was going. Eleven years before he had committed a sin so grievous that he knew if it were found out

he would be discredited before the people of the city, and especially discredited before the police officers. He made his way, tremblingly, to his superior officer, and, as he entered, he unbuckled his belt, took off his badge, removed his helmet, and then laid down at the feet of his superior officer these things that were the mark of his authority. He said, "Sir, you need not speak to me. I know what you would say. Eleven years ago I sinned, and I covered that sin, but I have never been able to forget it, night or day. In the midst of the busy thoroughfares of the city, and when I have been alone, it has faced me." Then, turning away, he said only one word, and repeated it over and over, "Remorse! Remorse!" Do you know what that is? If you tell me there is no future, I will not stop to argue with you, but if you sin, there is a day of judgment here; for a man faces conscience, and he meets remorse as well.

Then he faces the penalty of a broken law, too. In one of our courts a man was on trial for murder. Everybody knew he was guilty, for he was taken red-handed in his crime. The Judge looked into his face, and said, "Are you guilty, or not guilty?" He hesitated a second; his face grew deathly white, then he raised his right hand and said, "Your Honor, may God strike me dead if I am guilty of this crime!" A gentleman I know stood in the court room, and said that the man had scarcely uttered the words before his hands began to tremble, his face to whiten, his lips to turn blue, his eyes became glassy, and he dropped back in the witness chair—dead.

Sin is an awful thing. I would that God would help

me to speak about it as Jesus would speak if He were here. I think he would speak first in tones of condemnation—condemning sin because of its blighting, blasting power. It can take your daughter from your arms and drag her to perdition; it can take your little boy and mar his features and weaken his character, until, at last, he would turn from you, his father, blighted and ruined for time and for eternity.

Sin is a damnable thing. When I say the word, I think I almost hear the hiss of the serpent back in Eden. Sin has its day of judgment here. It never pays to sin. But the future—O God, help me to be earnest and faithful as regards the future! The Bible is full of judgment. In Genesis, in 2:17, we read: "For in the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die." That is judgment; and whenever one sins and breaks God's law he shall die—die to peace, die to strength of character, die to everything that makes life worth living.

But that is not all. In Ezek., 2:37, there is the judgment of Israel. "And I will cause you to pass under the rod." That is not all. In Matthew, 25:32, there is the judgment of nations. "And before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate one from another as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." That is not all. In Jude, verse 6, there is the judgment of the fallen angels. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." That is not all. In Second Corinthians, 5:10, there is the judgment seat of Christ. "For

we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." I must stop long enough to say that this judgment seat is for the Christian. It is not a judgment of sin; it is a judgment of the way we have used our time and talents, and a reward for work.

Then there is the last judgment, and I almost hesitate to read the words, they are so startling. "And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fell away, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the book." God keep and save you from that day. All the way through the Bible it is judgment, and yet all the way through God sounds this word, as if He would say, "I warned you!" Side by side with judgment always runs the stream of grace.

In the Portland harbor, on the northern coast of the United States, there is a great arm that runs out into the sea, and on the end of that arm stands the Portland lighthouse. That lighthouse has a stationary light, and standing there, far out in the sea, it warns the vessels or guides them as they come. Whenever a vessel is putting in towards Portland, that light flashes red in three directions, and white only in one. If your boat is coming from one direction, the Portland light flashes its red light, and says, "Danger." If your boat is coming from an-



other direction, the Portland light flashes back red, and says "Danger." If your boat is coming from still another direction, it flashes out, "Danger." But if your boat is coming in the right direction, the Portland light flashes white, and in the light of the white gleam you can make your way safely into the harbor.

That is like God's word. It is judgment, judgment, judgment, from Genesis to Revelation, but the book of Genesis starts out with the message, "Where art thou?" And the book of Revelation closes with the message, "Come, come, come, Let him that heareth say, Come." Then, as if some poor, lost, sorrowing man might think he was not included, Christ stretches out His arms of mercy, and says, "Whosoever will, let him come." The white light of grace runs from Genesis to Revelation, and yet it is judgment, too. There is no event so certain. In Acts, 17:30, we read, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." You cannot escape it. You may, for a while, escape the judgment of earth, you may, perhaps, buy yourself free, but you cannot escape that judgment, excepting by one way.

I know who will be there at the Day of Judgment. The unbeliever will be there, and I think I hear the Judge saying to him, "Ye would not come unto Me that ye might have life." Wicked men will be there, and wicked women. The drunkard also will be there. They arrested a man in an Eastern city awhile ago

and cast him into prison. He was a university man with degrees, but had lost everything through drink. When they arrested him he was in a maudlin condition, and the next morning the officer in charge heard him shaking the door of his cell. He commanded silence, but the poor man's voice sounded so pitiful as he asked, "Tell me what I am here for," that he said, "You are here with a charge of murder against you." The poor man drew back a few steps. "No, no; not murder! You are mistaken, officer; it is not murder." "Yes," said the officer, "it is murder." The poor fellow fell back on the stone floor, and as he fell, said, "Oh, do not tell my wife; it will kill her," and the officer said, "It was your wife you killed." That man will be there, but for the grace of God. It is an awful day. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened"—God's books. Down in the Southland the colored people have a song which runs like this:

"He sees all we do,  
He hears all we say,  
My God's a-writing all the time."

But you are writing, too. In the British Museum there is a piece of stone, about half the size of my Bible, which is probably five thousand years old, and in the middle of the stone there is the mark of a bird's foot. Five thousand years ago, when the stone was soft, the bird put its foot upon the stone, and the mark has been there ever since. My God is writing all the time, and so are you. The sin that you committed in New York, the sin that you committed in London, the

sin that you committed in the secrecy of your own room, has made its mark in God's book, and in your book. There are three books; there is the Bible, too. I think the Judge upon the throne would say, "But this Book, from Genesis to Revelation, was full of warning." And you would have to bow your head and say, "I know." And, I think, the Judge up on the throne might say, "But this Book, from beginning to end, had its invitation, and yet you would not come." For all the way God is saying, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" And, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Did you ever realize that you will be judged for the way you treated Christ? Have you not read in God's Word, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." You question the deity of Jesus. You slight His appeals, you disregard His invitations; but, one day at the Judgment, you must answer for the way you have treated Him. Can you tell me what is the greatest sin in the world? A poor girl, who was deceived almost in her childhood, and has lost that which has made your daughter's life sweet and beautiful, says, "Sir, I know what is the greatest sin." No, dear child, you do not. It is not that. A mother, with care written in every expression of her countenance, her hair gray and thin, her back bent; she is but fifty years of age, but she looks seventy; she is a drunkard's wife, and she says, "I have

waited for him, and he never came; I have gone hungry that I might give the scanty crusts to my babes; I know what is the greatest sin." But I answer, "No, dear woman, you do not; it is not that." There is a young man who is being eaten away by a nameless disease; he has lost the light of his eye, and he knows he dare not look a pure man or a pure woman in the face, and he says, "I know what is the greatest sin." No, poor fellow, you do not; it is not that. The greatest sin in the world is the rejection of Jesus. Men have committed that sin who have been high in commercial life; women have committed that sin who have been great socially; boys and girls have committed it. The greatest sin in the world is the rejection of Jesus; and when you stand, face to face with God, He will not ask you if you were a drunkard, or if you were impure; but He will say to you, "What did you do with Jesus?" And your answer to that question will determine whether you stand or fall.

At the judgment will be revealed every secret thing. Would you be willing to appear before the judge in your city that he might judge your outward life? But where is the man who would like his secret life to be judged? Mr. Moody used to say, that if a photographer came into the country who could photograph people's hearts, he would starve to death before he would get a customer. You would not want a picture of your heart to be shown, pure man or woman as you are. But every secret thing is to be revealed. It is a sharp judgment. There is only one way of escape. A minister once dreamed that he had died, and

that he stood before the judgment bar of God. He says that in his dream he heard God say to him, "Have you always been true?" "No," he replied, "Have you always been kind?" "No." "Have you always been just?" "No." And as He continued through the long list of questions, the minister said, "No," to them all. "Then," he said, "I thought the end had come, and judgment was to be passed, and I bowed my head and waited for sentence, when I was conscious of a light before me." He says, "I looked up and saw a face—such a face, fairer than all the sons of men. I looked at His hands, and saw the marks; then I knew who it was, and I heard Him say, 'Father, this man stood for Me down in the world. I will stand for him here.'"

The illustration may or may not be true to Scripture, but I know this—that I shall stand before God only because of Jesus Christ. There is only one way of escape, and I present that way to you now, even "though your sins be as scarlet, though they be red like crimson," though they be like the sands of the sea for number. You may have been crushed down by forces and circumstances, you may have lost all that makes life worth living, you may stand weakened because of some sin which you have inherited; you may stand condemned because of your own transgressions; but I say to you now, as the messenger of Jesus, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." He will blot them out, and He will hurl them from you as far as the east is from the west. Come, will you take Him? "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

## XVI

### THE LAST CHANCE

*"For it is impossible in the case of those who have once for all been enlightened and have tasted the sweetness of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have realized how good the Word of God is, and how mighty are the powers of the coming age, and then fall away; it is impossible, I say, to keep bringing them back to a new repentance, for to their own undoing they are repeatedly crucifying the Son of God afresh, and exposing Him to open shame." Heb. 6:4-6.  
(Weymouth's Translation.)*

**T**HIS is a marvelous rendering of a sad, sad text. It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There is no other book in all the Bible where such tribute is paid to Jesus. The first chapter is wonderful in the ascriptions of praise given unto Him. The second chapter starts in an equally marvelous way, by telling us that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest, at any time, we should let them slip. Therefore, I bring the message to you, with the prayer that it may lead the man who has been trifling, and the woman who has been indifferent, and the sinner who has been resisting, to the place where they may yield to Him, and accept Him as a present Saviour.

Some one has said that the Epistle to the Hebrews should always be read in connection with the Old



Testament Book of Leviticus. In Leviticus we have the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices, but in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have Jesus Christ as our one great offering and sacrifice, and as our Great High Priest. Dr. Arthur T. Pierson says, in one of his books, that in every book of the Bible is a word or expression which forms a key. The book is like a room with a closed door, and you never get in except by using the key. If you turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, you will find that the key-word is "better." It occurs not less than thirteen times. Here we find a better altar, a better sacrifice, a better hope, a better covenant. So, when you read the epistle, look for the key.

This is a startling text of Scripture: "For it is impossible in the case of those who once for all have been enlightened." "Then," you say, "there is no hope for me." But I cannot imagine that this text was written for those of us who have really been born again, for the man who has really seen Jesus Christ, and into whose life He has entered with saving power; for, if so, how can I explain that other Scripture, in John, 10:28 and 29: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Major Whittle said once, in speaking in Philadelphia, that this is the real sheep-fold—for it is Christ's hand underneath, and God's hand up above, and the believer is between the two. Then, the thirtieth verse reads; "I and My Father are One," as if He were saying, whatever else He

meant, that they are One to hold the believer and keep him safe in the midst of temptations and trials. So, I say again, that I can hardly think that this text is for the man who is a real Christian. This text says, "It is impossible for those who were once and for all enlightened." It seems to me that it is one thing to be enlightened, and quite another thing to be in the light. The child of God is already in the light. Is he not?

Then, for whom is it? Let me suggest to you, first, that it is a sharp warning for the men and women who have been deceived; they have never really found Jesus; He has never truly entered into their lives to abide. He said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And I will profess unto them, I never knew you." It is a possible thing to be a minister and not be saved. It is a possible thing to be a Church officer and never be saved. It is possible to be the Superintendent of a Sunday-school and never know God, or to be a teacher in a Sunday-school and never see Jesus. It is possible for one to be a Church officer and partake of the elements representing the body and blood of Jesus, and never really feed upon the real Bread of Life.

Have you been so deceived? If so, my heart goes out to you in sympathy. It is for that reason that, when temptation overtook you, you went down. It is for that reason that you have been saying, "Oh, that I knew where peace might be found," you found it not. But if you have been deceived, now is the

time of salvation. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." For whom is the text written? I should say for the unsaved, for it is possible to be very near the kingdom of God and never enter in; to be enlightened and never see the light. It is possible to be not far from the kingdom of God—and still be lost.

The "Royal Charter" had been around the world. She had touched at every important port, and was at last homeward bound. She had reached Queenstown, and then sailed for Liverpool; the message was telegraphed to Liverpool that she was almost home. Dr. William M. Taylor, a great New York preacher, was then in Liverpool as pastor, and the wife of the first mate of the "Royal Charter" was a member of his church. You may remember that the "Royal Charter" never came into Liverpool. An officer of my church told me that he waited on the dock all night, straining his eyes to catch a first glimpse of the vessel. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool was there. Bands of musicians and thousands of people waited to give her a welcome home. But the "Royal Charter" never came in. She went down in the night, losing almost all on board. They came to Dr. Taylor, and said, "Will you go and tell the wife of the first mate?" So he started off to tell her. As he laid his hand upon the door bell the door flew open, and a little girl sprang out, crying, "Oh, Dr. Taylor, I thought it was my papa. He is coming home to-day." The preacher said he felt like an executioner as he walked into the house. He found the table laid for breakfast, and the wife of the first mate stepped forward, her face shining, as she said, "Dr. Taylor, this is, indeed, a priv-

ilege, and if you will wait a little while, perhaps you will sit at our table with us, for my husband was on the "Royal Charter," and he is coming home."

Dr. Taylor says he looked at her a moment, while he steadied himself and held on to a near-by chair and then said, "Poor woman, your husband will never come home. The 'Royal Charter' went down last night, and your husband is lost." He says that she threw her hands to her head, staggered for a moment, and then fell, and as she fell she cried, "O my God, so near home and lost." Yes, and some of you are as near as that. Near by a mother's pleading; near by the minister's preaching; near by the missionary's singing. You are almost in. My message is for you. "It is impossible for those who were once and for all enlightened." God keep you from rejecting Him. How far one may go towards home and still fall away!

I wonder if I have faithfully presented God to you. I have showed Him to you as the Judge upon the throne. I have made Him infinite, almighty, eternal, unchangeable, omniscient and omnipresent. I have showed Him to you with the seas rocking in His hand as in a basin. I have pictured Him as holding the winds in His fist, and I wonder if I have given you a perfect picture of God. I will turn from God as a judge, and show Him to you as infinite in His mercy, matchless in His love, marvelous in His tenderness. Running from Genesis to Revelation is the cry of His yearning heart over a lost and ruined race. He is calling, He is pleading, and if any man is finally lost, it will be in spite of God's yearning and pleading,

not because of God. I will tell you why the man of fifty years of age finds it hard to be saved.

A famous scientist tells how that, in the course of his experiments in the mountains, he used to be lowered over a precipice. He would step into the basket, and the men would lower him for his work; but whenever they lowered him, they would always test his weight to see if they could lift him again. One day they let him down farther and farther than ever before, until all the rope at their command was exhausted. When his day's work was done, he would give the signal, and they would draw him up. But on this night, when they took hold of the rope to lift him, they could not do so. They tugged and pulled and strained, but they could not manage it, and he had to wait until they got additional men to pull him up, and the scientist says that the reason they could not lift him was because they failed to take into consideration the length and weight of the rope. I know why a man of fifty years of age has a hard time to surrender. It is because he must always lift against his past refusals. You say, "No," and your heart is hardened; you say, "No," and your will becomes stubborn, and if you are finally lost, the responsibility is not with God.

"It is impossible for those who were once and for all enlightened." That does not mean that if I give you the truth, and you never hear it again, your condemnation is complete. The thought is this: "Once and for all enlightened." It is used in different places in the New Testament. "Once and for all He offered Himself." "Once and for all He entered into

the Holy of Holies." Let me make this suggestion. Truth is like a circle. It is all the time being completed. Maybe your circle has not been completed. Maybe you needed this message—who knows but God?—that this is the last call, and the circle is completed once for all. Then, if that is true, in God's name, do not resist.

D. L. Moody made his way into a great hotel in Philadelphia, and gave his name to the clerk at the desk. As he did so, a well-dressed gentleman, standing near, came forward and said, "Are you Mr. Moody?" "Yes," he said, "I am." "Well," said the gentleman, "I wonder if you remember me. It was in a Hudson River city. You were preaching, and I wanted to be converted, and I said I would go home and settle it." "Oh, yes," said Mr. Moody, "I well remember it. What did you do?" "I went home," replied the gentleman, "sat down in my library, put down on paper all the things I must give up if I were a Christian, and on the other side, all the things I would gain. Then," said he, "I deliberately bowed my head in my hands, and said, 'I will not.'" And Mr. Moody told me that the man stepped back, folded his arms, and there came into his face a look that was indescribable as, clenching his fists, and setting his teeth, he said, "From that day to this, sir, I have hated God, I have hated Him." Mr. Moody told me that story with the great tears rolling down his cheeks, as he said, "I had seen that man sobbing his way to the front of the church with the tears running like rain down his cheeks, yet he said, 'No.'" In God's name, don't you say it. I plead with you.



I went out from Dayton, Ohio, some time ago, to preach in a little country church. When I gave the invitation I was almost surprised to find thirty-five people come to the front. I was just about to leave the meeting to hurry into the city for another service, when I said, "Is there not another?" and away back against the wall an old man rose, about eighty-five years old. His hair was gray and thin, his back was bent, his step was tottering, as he leaned upon his stick. When he reached the front, he dropped his stick and took my hand in his, saying, "I thought it might be my last chance," and he dropped upon his knees. But do not imagine for a moment that the last chance comes only at eighty-five. It may come now—*Now!*

"It is impossible for those who were once and for all enlightened." I know it means enlightened about God, enlightened about Jesus, enlightened about the teaching of this Book. But you have been enlightened about a thousand things that should lead you into the kingdom of God. You know that sin is a deadly thing. There is not a man who is holding in his heart or life some secret sin, but knows that one day sin will damn him. A minister once said to me, "May I tell you the story of my boyhood's friend?" He said: "We were brought up together in Scotland, and we came over to Canada. My friend became an expert engineer. He prospered in business, and had a charming wife and beautiful children, and his home was gladdened because his old mother came to live with him in the last years of her life. But, alas!" he said, "my friend became a drunkard. His wife's tears were

of no avail, his children's pleadings were powerless. He would take the pledge only to break it. Finally, they had to send and fetch him away from a public-house, saying, 'Your mother is dying.' That seemed to sober him, and as he stood beside her deathbed, his mother said, 'James, you must not drink any more, and before I die I want you to sign the pledge again.' He was honest enough to say, 'Mother, I have signed it a hundred times and cannot keep it.' Her breath was fast leaving her, and her last appeal was this: 'James, my precious boy, say this: "I will never touch a drop of drink again unless I take it from my mother's hands."' He hesitated a moment, but he saw she was dying, so he said, 'Mother, I will say it'; and, holding her hand, he repeated those words."

My minister friend said that when the day of the funeral came, that man was delirious through drink; and how do you suppose he got it? "My boyhood's friend," he said, "carried the glass in and put it into his mother's dead hand, and raised it to his lips." That is sin. Oh, my heart goes out in pity to the boy who is going on the downward course, and my arms reach out to the man whose children are to-day suffering because he is on the way to a drunkard's end.

The story is told of a revival sweeping through the university at Princeton, New Jersey. Aaron Burr came to the president of the university, and said, "Mr. President, I have made up my mind to consider the claims of Christ. Now, Mr. President, what would you do?" And the old president of the university gave him this advice: He said, "Burr, if I were you, I would wait until the excitement of the revival had

subsided, and then I would think it out carefully." Aaron Burr bowed his head a moment, and then he said, "Mr. President, that is exactly what I will do." And, it is stated as a fact, that never again in his life did he express a desire to be a Christian, and they say he died without such an expression.

"Once and for all enlightened!" Most of all, enlightened about Him, my Saviour, who is able to save to the uttermost. There is not one of you so far from God but He can save him, not a woman so hopeless and helpless but He can save her—not one. And when once He has saved you, He can hold you. No temptation can overtake you but He will furnish the way of escape. I enlightened you about Jesus. He is not only your Saviour, He is your Guide, your Comforter. One of these days your heart will ache and break, and you will need Him. It is all very well to say that you can do without Him, when your friends are about you, when your family circle is complete; but, how about doing without Him when your heart is broken? Here is the solemn part of the text: "If they shall fall away." God is merciful, the spirit is pleading, Jesus is near. But the Word of God says it is impossible if they should fall away. Why impossible? "Because they have crucified the Son of God afresh." That is unbelief. If any of you had stood at the crucifixion and seen the men driving the nails through His hands, you would have resisted, you would have stood by Him. I wonder if you are aware that whenever you say "No," it is like driving in a nail; it is crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame. You do not under-

stand the sin of unbelief; you do not understand the seriousness of rejection. If you could understand, I think you would be startled. Do not resist Him. You may be saved to-day if you will.

## XVII

### THE ANXIOUS SOUL'S QUESTION

Acts 16:30, 31.

**T**HE apostle Paul lived in a state of perpetual revival. He had only to come into Philippi, the principal city of Macedonia, and to sit by the river bank, and Lydia, the seller of purple, straightway believed and was baptized. He had only to walk along the streets to the place of prayer, and there was so much of power about him that "a certain damsel, possessed with the spirit of divination," followed him and cried, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God," and "Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the market place," tore off their clothes, beat them with many stripes and cast them into an inner prison, fastening their feet in the stocks. But this did not in any way affect these servants of God. It was doubtless true in their case, as one of the modern poets has expressed it, that "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," for at mid-

night, in the midst of all the darkness, "they sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them." What a strange sound it must have been in the old jail, where ordinarily only curses had been heard! But suddenly there came a great earthquake; the foundations of the prison began to shake and the doors were thrown open and "every one's bands were loosed." In the midst of all this confusion, the jailer sprang into their presence, and was ready to kill himself, thinking the prisoners had escaped, when Paul exclaimed, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

#### "CONVICTION" THE FIRST STEP

There is just in this connection a clear distinction drawn between men of influence and men of power. Ordinarily we say, what the church needs to-day is men of influence, meaning by this men of position. And so it does; but from this illustration I think we may argue, the greater demand is for men of power. Paul and Silas had not influence enough to keep themselves out of jail, but they had a power sufficient to pray down the prison walls and throw wide open its doors. There is also in the whole incident given to us a true and striking picture of what it means for one to be saved.

If I were an artist, I should like to draw upon a blackboard a great letter "C," then fill out from that one letter four words. These four words would present to us a picture of this Philippian jailer not only, but also of the one who really and truly comes



to Christ. The first word would be "Conviction." This we surely find in the jailer, for we are told "he came trembling." It is not possible for any one to be saved without first of all experiencing real conviction; however, it ought to be suggested that in different individuals it may manifest itself in different ways.

First. Sometimes it is evidenced in great need. One would display his ignorance if he were to assert that Nicodemus, for example, was the chief of sinners; for he was a ruler of his people, an honored member of the Sanhedrin, a most circumspect man in every way; but in his heart there was a great sense of his need, which his position had never satisfied; and this compelled him, I imagine, to seek out the Great Teacher.

Second. Not infrequently it may assume the form of a sense of complete unworthiness, such as the poor publican had when he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" but the article there in the Greek was a definite one, and what he really said was this: "God be merciful to me the sinner," as if he were the only one in the world. This is a most hopeful condition.

Third. As a rule, it is the consciousness that we have sinned and are, therefore, under condemnation that disturbs us; and in the unregenerate state, it is the fearfulness that the penalty of the broken law may fall upon us; yet I am quite clear in my own mind that there may be a deeper conviction of one's sins after one's regeneration than before.

Stanley tells us that he found men in Africa who never knew that they were black until they looked

upon a white man. So many a man can never know what sin is until he sees it in the presence of Jesus Christ. But whatever the form of conviction, it must surely be experienced before the light will dawn. Come to him just as you are, for He can satisfy your longings by filling you with Himself and He is able to blot out all your transgressions and forgive all your sins.

#### “CONTRITION” THE NEXT ESSENTIAL

The second word starting with the letter “C” would be “Contrition.” This the Philippian jailer had, for he “fell down before them.” It is certainly true that one cannot come to God unless, first of all, he be possessed of the broken and contrite heart. Why should this not be true? We have sinned against God and there must be contrition for it if we are to be forgiven. God may be ever so willing to forgive, still he does not do it without contrition.

In the State prison of Iowa there is a young man held as a convict, against whom the charge of arson stands, and also the attempt to kill. Very recently, the party whose building was fired circulated a petition asking that the young man be pardoned; the man whose life was attempted followed his example, and succeeded in securing the name of the judge, by whom he was sentenced, the attorney who prosecuted him, and the entire jury which found him guilty. This petition was carried to the Governor. In the face of it, strong as it was, he said, “No, the man cannot be pardoned; for,” said he “his crime

was not committed against the individual, but against the commonwealth of Iowa, and he must serve his sentence." And it ought to be remembered by the sinner that these words are true, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned." So there must be contrition or there cannot be salvation; and yet what a marvelous thing it is that, if one be ever so great a sinner, the moment this spirit is manifest God blots out all his transgressions.

It is stated that, in St. Petersburg, a father's heart was well-nigh broken because of the prodigality of his son who was addicted to the habit of gambling, and with that came the accompanying vices. At last the old father conceived the idea that what the boy needed was better surroundings, and so he set out to secure them. What a mistake this is and how many have made it! That is not what you need. This father of whom I speak secured his son's appointment in the army, but he went from bad to worse until he had reached the end of it all. Completely discouraged, he was casting up his accounts and, when the overwhelming sum was known, in great desperation he wrote at the bottom of the column these words, "Who is to pay all this?"

The Emperor of Russia, going through the barracks to inspect the soldiers, passed this young man, who, with his head in his arms, had fallen asleep. The emperor, glancing at the figures before him on the table, read the question, and then bending over wrote one word, "Nicholas." And the story goes that that one man was free. I do not know whether this story is true, but I do know that if you enumer-

ate all of your sins from the earliest recollection to the present moment, and beneath the sum of them all write this question, "Who is to pay all this?" there will be one name written in answer to it,

"Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest note in seraph song,  
Sweetest carol ever sung,  
Jesus, blessed Jesus."

#### THEN FOLLOWS "CONVERSION"

The third word starting from the letter "C" would be "Conversion," and this we find in the Philippian jailer, for we are told "he washed their stripes." This was surely a great change in the man. At first he exultingly fastened their feet in the stocks, and now I can imagine him tearfully stooping down with cooling touch to ease their pain. There must be conversion if we are ever to be saved.

I am speaking of the new birth, that is, God's part of it; but I am emphasizing the thing man must do if he is ever to see the light. In one way it is "Right about face!" or it is following the example of the blind men who "put themselves in the way of Jesus"; or it is the obedience of the lepers who, as they went, were cleansed. Indeed, to sum it all up, it is for the unsaved man to have "the willing mind." (Isa. 1:19.)

God never saved any man until, first of all, he was willing to be saved; so whether one kneels at the altar, or bows in prayer in his own home, or

stands in the crowded audience, or signs the inquirer's card, the end of all these things must be the submission of the will to God; and then he does His own work, and we are born again, or from above.

#### CONFESSING CHRIST BEFORE MEN

The fourth and last word to be completed from the letter "C" is "Confession," and this is clearly found in the experience of the jailer; for we are told "he was baptized." What a mistake it is for a man to believe in his heart and fail to confess with his lips! Such a position is never satisfactory, and never brings real joy. It is not being obedient, to say the least. If your physician should write a prescription for you in your sickness, and you should have it filled in a peculiar way, putting in two parts and leaving out two parts, he would have the right to find fault with you and tell you that you would never get well until you took the whole prescription. It is true with the Great Physician in our sin sickness; he has written the prescription that assures us of life. It is composed of two parts (Rom. 10:9, 10) :

First. Believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and acknowledge Him as Lord.

Second. Confess with your lips that you have appropriated Him, not as a Saviour, but as your Saviour, for if one desires to be fully saved he must commit himself. It is not walking with the army that constitutes one a soldier; it is not the wearing of the garment of a soldier that makes him such, for

this may be hired or stolen; but it is the definite enlistment, and this comes to one who would be a soldier of Jesus Christ when he definitely and clearly confesses Him. This is his enlistment.

#### THE QUERY OF THE UNSAVED

“What, therefore, must I do to be saved?” This seems to be the unsaved man’s first query. Philosophy has never yet answered this question. Infidelity has tried it, and made it a mockery. God’s answer is clear and simple. The Bible says, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” It is very easy to receive a gift; the first step in salvation is not to give something, but rather to receive; then, receiving eternal life, you may give yourself unto Him for service.

Man would naturally say, if you would be a son of God, try to walk as a son and you will eventually become such. But God makes it very clear that there can be no real life until there is a step taken, first of all, by faith; then He reveals Himself. The things of God are spiritually discerned, and God is a revelation, not an explanation. To make it very clear, the best answer is the one given to the Philipian jailer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” There is something very significant in the way the names of Jesus Christ are used. For example, when he is called Lord, it is to emphasize His kingly office, or His reigning power;



and what can the meaning be but this, when we are told to believe on him as Lord? We must reach the place where we are willing to let Him rule and reign in our life. Can you submit to this? He will never make a failure of it. Give Him absolute control; never take a step without His guidance—this is the secret of grace and joy.

Jesus is the earthly name, and we are told that "thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." It must be necessary, then, for one to get a conception of Him as He hangs upon the cross; and certainly we know He was there for just one purpose, namely, "that he might die in our stead."

Major Whittle tells the story of a company of bushwackers, arrested in Missouri during the days of the Civil War. They were sentenced to be shot, when a young boy touched the commanding officer on the arm and said, "Won't you allow me to take the place of the man standing yonder? He has a family, and he will be greatly missed; no one will miss me. May I take his place?" When the officer had given his consent, the young boy stepped forward, drew the man out of line and stepped in his place. When the command was given to fire, the boy fell dead; his grave is still to be found in the little Missouri town, and on the little stone that marks it are cut these words, "Sacred to the memory of Willie Lear; he took my place." The commanding officer's name was John McNeill, and the story was vouched for recently by one of the officer's personal friends in Evansville, Ind.

This is true of Jesus Christ; He died that we might live, but we must accept Him. There is no life except in Him, and the idea of substitution is found in all the Bible. He is also called Christ, but this is His resurrection name, and as Christ he stands this moment at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. Can you accept Him there?

It does seem to me that this makes the whole Christian life very plain. He is my Lord, because He rules me; He is Jesus, because he died to save me; and He is Christ because, whenever the mistakes of life overtake me, He stands at God's right hand to make explanation and intercession. Do you thus receive Him?

It is also to be remembered that, in the case of the Philippian jailer, light came in all its clearness when "they spake unto him the word of the Lord." I have very little confidence in that man who is not founded upon God's Word for assurance of his salvation. I have all the hope imaginable for that one who will receive it with meekness. I do not mean that he should be able at once to explain it; I only ask that by faith he receive it (John 5:24). I am persuaded that, if we could only persuade men to receive the Word of God, it would mean a joy unspeakable and a peace which the world cannot give, neither take away. One could not live in the promise and declaration of John's third chapter and sixteenth verse without rejoicing in hope. Say it over and over to yourself this way, and thus make it your own verse: "God so loved 'me' that he gave his only begotten Son that 'I' might believe in him and should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I would not have you forget in this interesting story of the jailer, that he was baptized. Baptism is inseparably connected with believing and is as certainly a command of God's as that we believe. We may differ as to the mode, but too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the command itself; it is, of course, true that one may be saved without it, as, for example, the thief on the cross; as for him, it was impossible; but I should be afraid to run the risk when Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." At least, when we stand before Him, we could but say that we had neglected to do as He commanded. It is the experience of Christians everywhere that this one of the sacraments brings upon the believer a marvelous blessing, and leads him out into an experience which can never be described in words.

It is not to be forgotten that when all these steps had been taken by the Philippian jailer he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house. That word is certainly true that "in his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." And why should it not be so?

One of my friends, a Scotchman, told me that some time ago he was going through his native land and stopped at a little cottage by the wayside to rest; when he entered the room his first inclination was to be seated in a very comfortable chair, which occupied a prominent place in the room; but just as he made the attempt an old Scotchwoman sprang to the chair and, lifting her hand, exclaimed, "Nay,

nay, man; don't sit there," and then she pointed to the scarlet cord fastened around the chair, which he had not noticed before, and explained, "One day Her Majesty, the Queen, a sudden storm coming upon her, left her carriage and came into this house." And, with a look of great reverence, this venerable woman added: "She sat in this chair, and when she went away we fastened this scarlet cord about it, and I said, 'We will give it to John, and he can keep it in his family,' for was it not wonderful that Her Majesty, the Queen, had used it?" But I have a greater cause for rejoicing; Jesus Christ, the King of kings has counted it a joy to take up His abode in my heart. He has cast around me the scarlet cord which marks me as His own. It is a great thing for me to say that He is mine, but it is greater far for me to declare that I am His, and with the Philipian jailer, therefore, I rejoice with exceeding great joy.

## XVIII

### A LIFE MADE OVER

*"So he made it again." Jeremiah 18:4.*

**A**T the time Jeremiah was called upon to prophesy, Jerusalem and the people of Israel were in a lamentable condition and seemed daily to be drifting farther and farther from God.

Jeremiah has been called the "Weeping Prophet," and he was well named, because he realized the sinfulness of sin and understood, as did no other man of his times, the awful condition into which Israel had drifted. He seems to be seeking in every possible way to turn them back again to Jehovah. Waking and sleeping, they are in his mind and on his heart, and all that he writes is in the nature of a plea that they should turn again to Him who waits to receive them with all the tenderness of a father and the pity of a mother.

One day he makes his way to the house of the potter, and at once he is interested in the work which is going on under the potter's direction. He sees him take a lump of clay, hold it for a moment in his hands, then place it carefully upon the wheel, and, as he turns the wheel quickly, with his deft fingers, he fashions it into a vessel, which to the untrained eyes of the

prophet seems to be perfect enough; but when the work appears to be finished the potter takes it in his hands and examines it with critical eye, and, as a shade of disappointment passes over his face, he crushes the vessel in his hands, places it upon the wheel once more and makes it over again.

#### THE DIVINE POTTER

There were but two lines of operation open to him in fashioning the vessel. One was to leave it in its imperfect condition, which was doubtless caused by some imperfection in the clay, but the vessel would then have been of the commoner sort; the other was to remove the obstruction to the working out of his plans and make a vessel which might have been used in the king's palace.

Jeremiah is most interested in this work, and at once his mind turns to Israel, and he exclaims, "Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

This is an oft-used figure in the Bible; both in the Old Testament and in the New we find it. Isaiah uses it when he says, "But now, O Lord, thou art our father, we are the clay and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." And St. Paul makes use of the same figure when he exclaims, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and



to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?"

If this illustration is to apply to our experience, then we are the clay and God is the potter. If He is given the right of way in shaping our lives, they can but please Him, and they must be beautiful in His sight. The clay is not attractive in itself, but when the hands of the potter touch it, and the thought of the potter is brought to bear upon it, and the plan of the potter is worked out in it and through it, then there is a real transformation.

#### THE SINNER REGENERATED

One day in the city of Venice, I went into a great Venetian glass storeroom. The finished work I saw there was superbly beautiful, but my friend by my side insisted that I go into the workroom, which seemed uninteresting enough until I beheld one of the glass blowers blowing upon the glass and saw it take shape as his mind influenced it and his will formed it, and, as I stood gazing upon him, as fine a bit of Venetian work as I have ever seen was in his hands. What the glass blower can do through the glass God can do in our lives, if we but give Him an opportunity.

This is to me an illustration of regeneration. I was preaching in a New York village one evening, several years ago, when an old man, who for sixteen

years had not been in the church, came to the service to hear "the singer sing." He was a hopeless and helpless drunkard, his children had forsaken him and his wife was dead. He was the first to lift his hand when I made the appeal and the first to go into the after-meeting as I gave the invitation. I saw him kneel; I heard him breathe out a prayer of penitence and confession, and watched him as he arose an absolutely changed man. I have known him for years, and he has never swerved from the path of duty and privilege open before the Christian. The man who was once despised is now respected, and the outcast of other days is the reputable citizen of to-day. This is but another illustration of the potter and the clay.

#### OUT OF TUNE WITH CHRIST

On the day of our conversion we yielded to God, for men are converted when they say "I will" to Him, and only then; and when we begin the Christian life we place ourselves in His hands and He is supposed to direct our every step; but the Christian experience of some of us has not been altogether satisfactory. There may have been some imperfections which have strangely influenced us, some secret sin which we would not give up. We may have had some controversy with Him regarding the following out of His plan for our lives, and thus the life which began so well is marred, the harmony seems to be gone and we are out of tune. We are Christians, but in experience we are joyless. We are likewise fruitless, and we are also shorn of power. We long to be holy, but know

we are not. We desire to be pure in heart, but we are conscious of our weakness. We know the value of fellowship with Him, but we are still in bondage.

It is a comforting thing to know that with this consciousness of failure we are still in the potter's hands. If we do not yield to His will and let Him make us over, we shall continue to be shorn of peace and power and blessing, and the vessel will be marred and unfit for the best use of the King. But we ought to learn the lesson from the potter and the clay, that God can make us over if we will but let Him. *God would and man would not* is the secret of many a failure.

In crossing the continent to the Pacific coast at one time, I was urged to go by the Santa Fe Railroad and was ticketed in the special Limited Express. The journey was fine and the equipment was palatial, and all went well until we came to the desert; and then, although every ventilator was closed, every window shut and every blind drawn down to save us from the glare of the sun upon the sand, the journey was most trying.

#### A PLAN FOR EVERY LIFE

Opposite my section sat a man who continually raised the blind and looked out of the window. The porter quite as often drew the blind down. I went over to talk with him and complain of the journey and to say that I wished I had gone by the mountains. He looked at me as if I was bereft of reason and said, "This is the most wonderful trip in the world." I left him almost with disgust. My annoyance and dis-

comfort all the time increased, and after a while, wearied more and more by the journey, I went back to talk with him again. Among other things, I asked him his business, and, as he threw up the window blind, he said, with a smile, "I am an irrigator; and that," said he, "is why the journey is wonderful, for if I could turn the water in on this desert I could make it blossom like the rose." I went back to my seat, having learned my lesson: that all that God required was to have the right of way in my life and turn the water in and the result would be victory.

God has a plan for every life. Jeremiah did not know what was in the mind of the potter, but we know what is in God's mind for us. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be confirmed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). And again: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). And nothing less than this can satisfy God, and when we see Him face to face we shall have joy in His presence just in the proportion as we have followed out His directions.

"The years of man are the looms of God,  
Let down from the place of the sun,  
Wherein we are weaving always,  
Till the mystic web is done.

"And when the task is ended  
And the web is turned and shown,  
We shall hear the voice of the Master;  
It shall say to us, 'Well done.'"

So, if we have failed, God can make us over. He is still the potter and we are still the clay. He has many ways of making us over. Sometimes by outward circumstances like the potter's wheel, trials and disappointments, days when the sun does not shine and nights when the stars are dead; heart-breaking experiences and open graves before which we stand to place our best loved dead away. All these things are but the touch of the Master's hand and are intended to make our lives more as they should be.

I can quite understand the block of marble saying, "What does this blasting mean?" when the very foundations of the mountains seem to shake. And when it is on the railroad train, rumbling along to the busy city, I can scarcely wonder at its saying, "And what does this mean?" And still again, when the artist, with mallet and chisel cuts away at it I can imagine it saying, "What can this mean? It is all past comprehension." But when the angel comes forth from the marble imprisonment, so perfect that if God would breathe upon it it would move its wings and fly to the angel choir, then I can hear the block of marble say, "I understand."

#### LIVES MADE OVER FOR SERVICE

Sometimes by His Word he makes us over. God's Word is a light, and it is in the light that flowers come to bloom and fragrance. God's Word is a hammer, and, in His loving hands, it is used to break away our imperfections. God's Word is a fire, and it burns and burns until there is reflected in us the image of Christ.

God's Word is water, and water always cleanses by displacement. We have only to yield to Him and the victory will be complete.

The Bible has accounts of many lives made over. In the Old Testament, we find Jacob, the supplanter, the cheat by name and also by nature; but when he is in the grip of the angel of the Lord, and the angel wrestles with him, he limps away from the angelic embrace, and to power, and, instead of Jacob the Supplanter, he is Israel the Prince.

Elijah, in the same Old Testament, was a man of like passions with ourselves; but his passions, controlled, were like the very steeds to the chariot which came from heaven to be his escort into the heavenly city.

St. Paul, in the New Testament, bitter as a persecutor, thirsting for the blood of those who believed in the Nazarene, consenting to the death of St. Stephen and persecuting Christians unto strange cities, becomes as gentle as a woman and glories in the fact that he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

St. Peter, who was in other days a man of weakness, ignorance and failure, becomes the mighty preacher of the sermon on Pentecost and is the writer of superb epistles, which scholars say are written in the purest Greek of the New Testament; and what God can do for Jacob and Elijah, St. Paul and St. Peter, he can do for you and do for me.

If our lives were completely yielded to our great Master, the whole world would be charmed by the beauty and power of the Christian life. Then we would be victorious in the time of trial, for even



though the nights were dark and the burdens heavy we could hear him say, "Fear not, I am with thee," "Thou art mine," "My grace is sufficient for thee."

"When, sin-stricken, burdened, and weary,  
From bondage I longed to be free,  
There came to my heart the sweet message:  
'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

"Though tempted and sadly discouraged,  
My soul to this refuge will flee,  
And rest in the blessed assurance:  
'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

"My bark may be tossed by the tempest  
That sweeps o'er the turbulent sea—  
A rainbow illumines the darkness:  
'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

"O Lord, I would press on with courage,  
Though rugged the pathway may be,  
Sustained and upheld by thy promise:  
'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

"Soon, soon will the warfare be over,  
My Lord face to face I shall see,  
And prove, as I dwell in His presence:  
'His grace was sufficient for me.'"

Then we would be triumphant in the journey of life; we are not always understood, we are sometimes criticised, but if we are His—fear not, be strong.

"Men may misjudge thy aim,  
Think they have cause for blame,  
Say thou art wrong—  
Hold on thy quiet way:  
Christ is the Judge—not they;  
Fear not! Be strong!"















